DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON JORGE CORONA MIKE SPICER

TRANSFORMERS

image

#23

ENERGON UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMERS

ISSUE TWENTY-THREE

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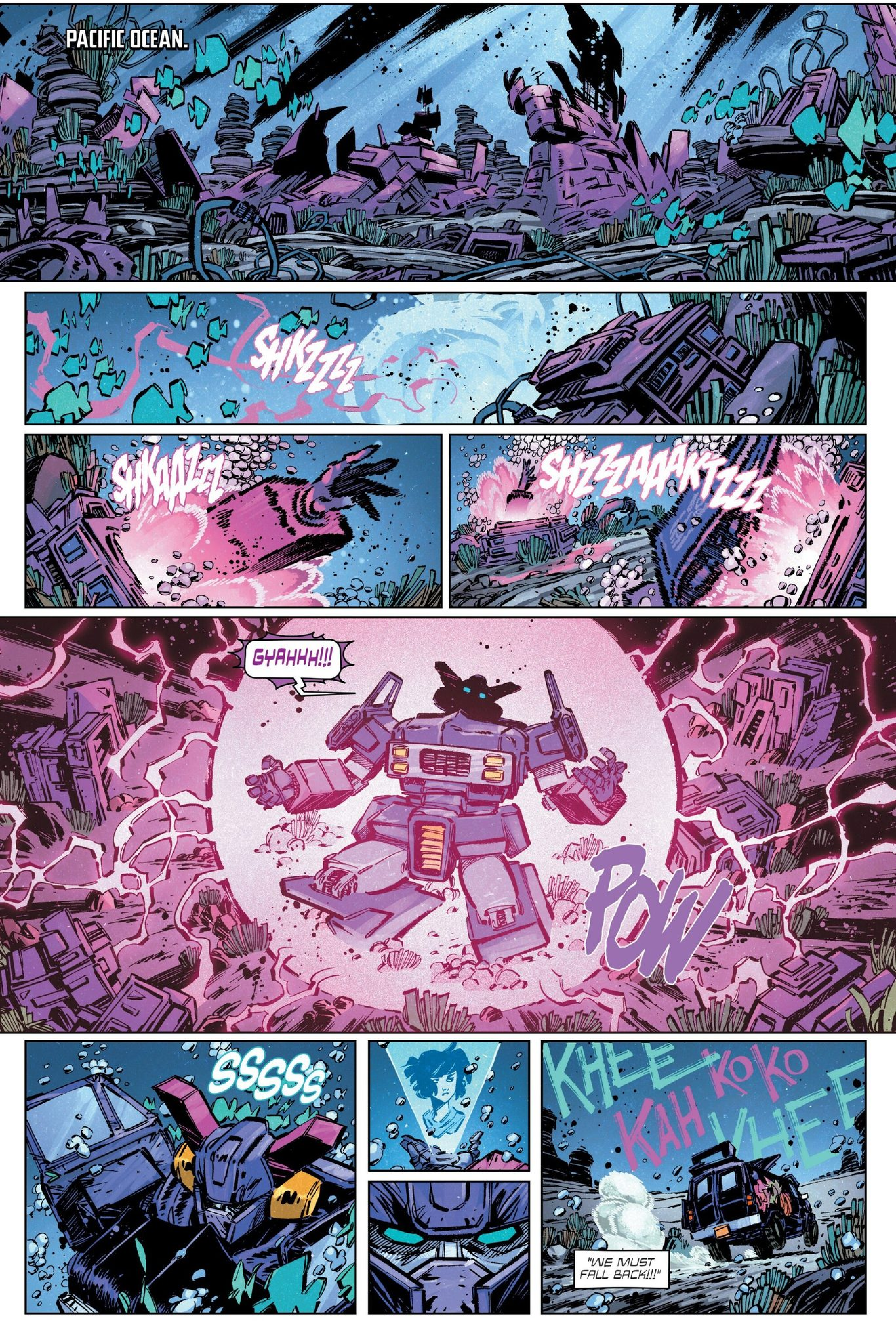
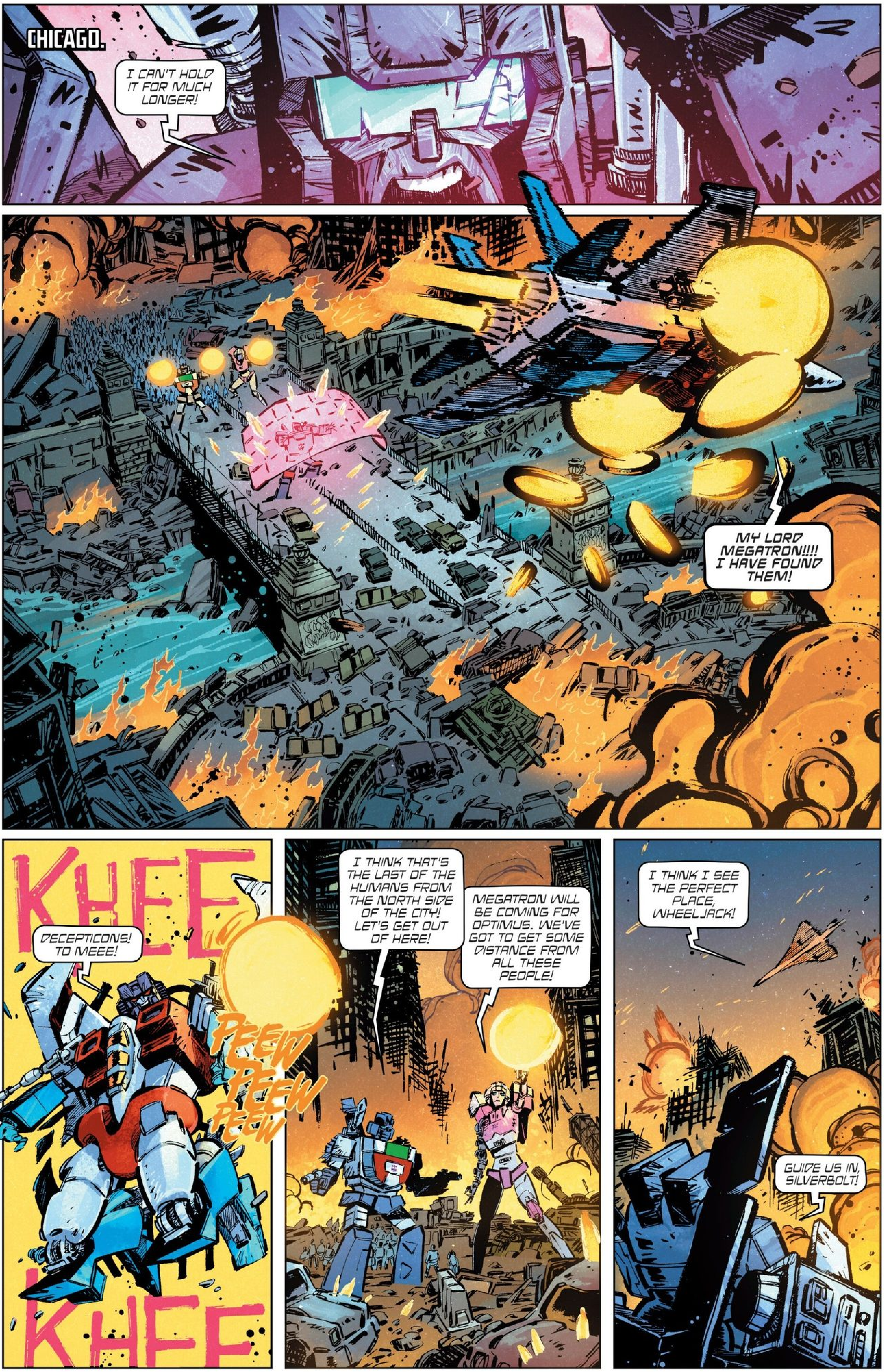
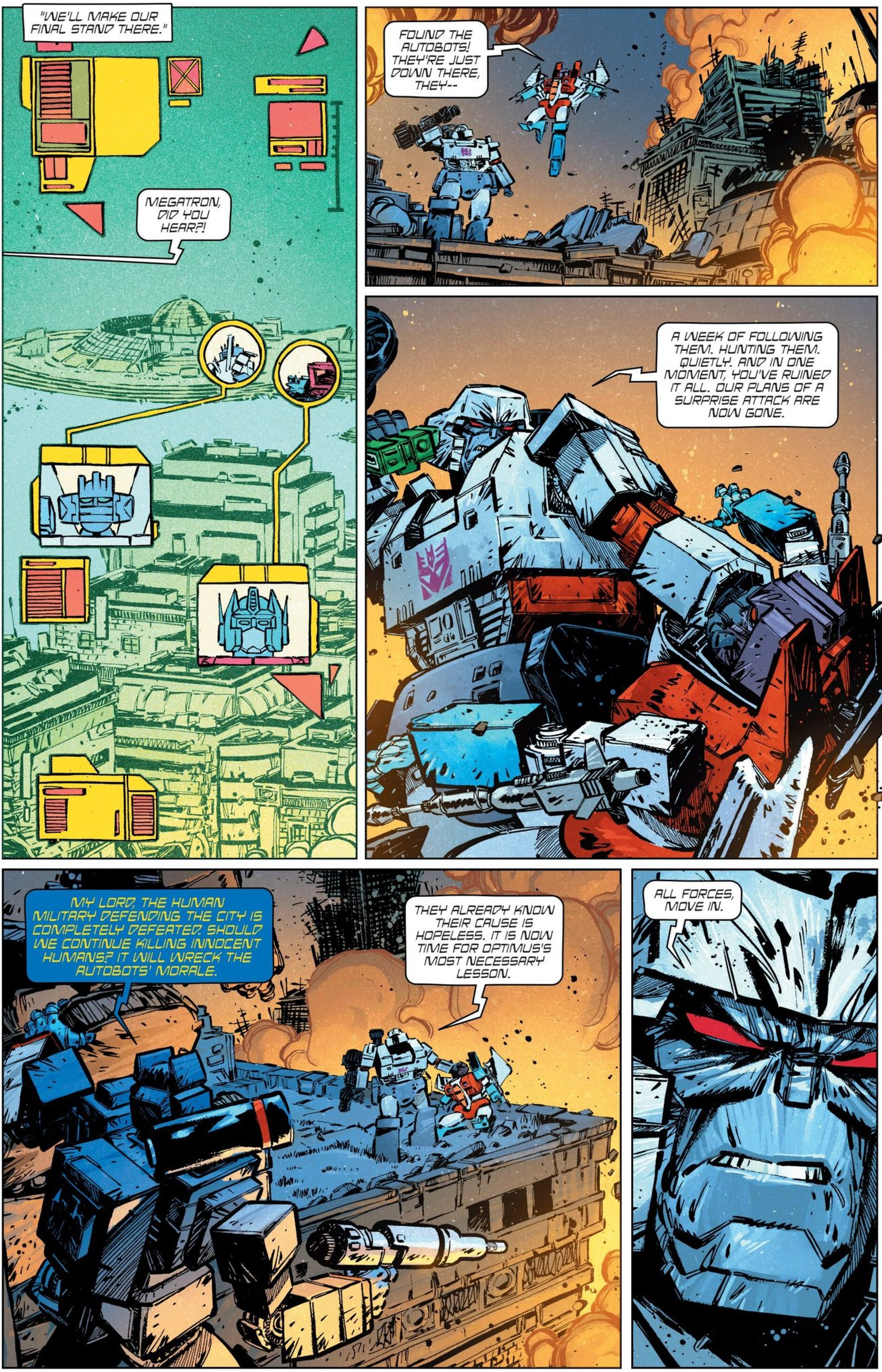
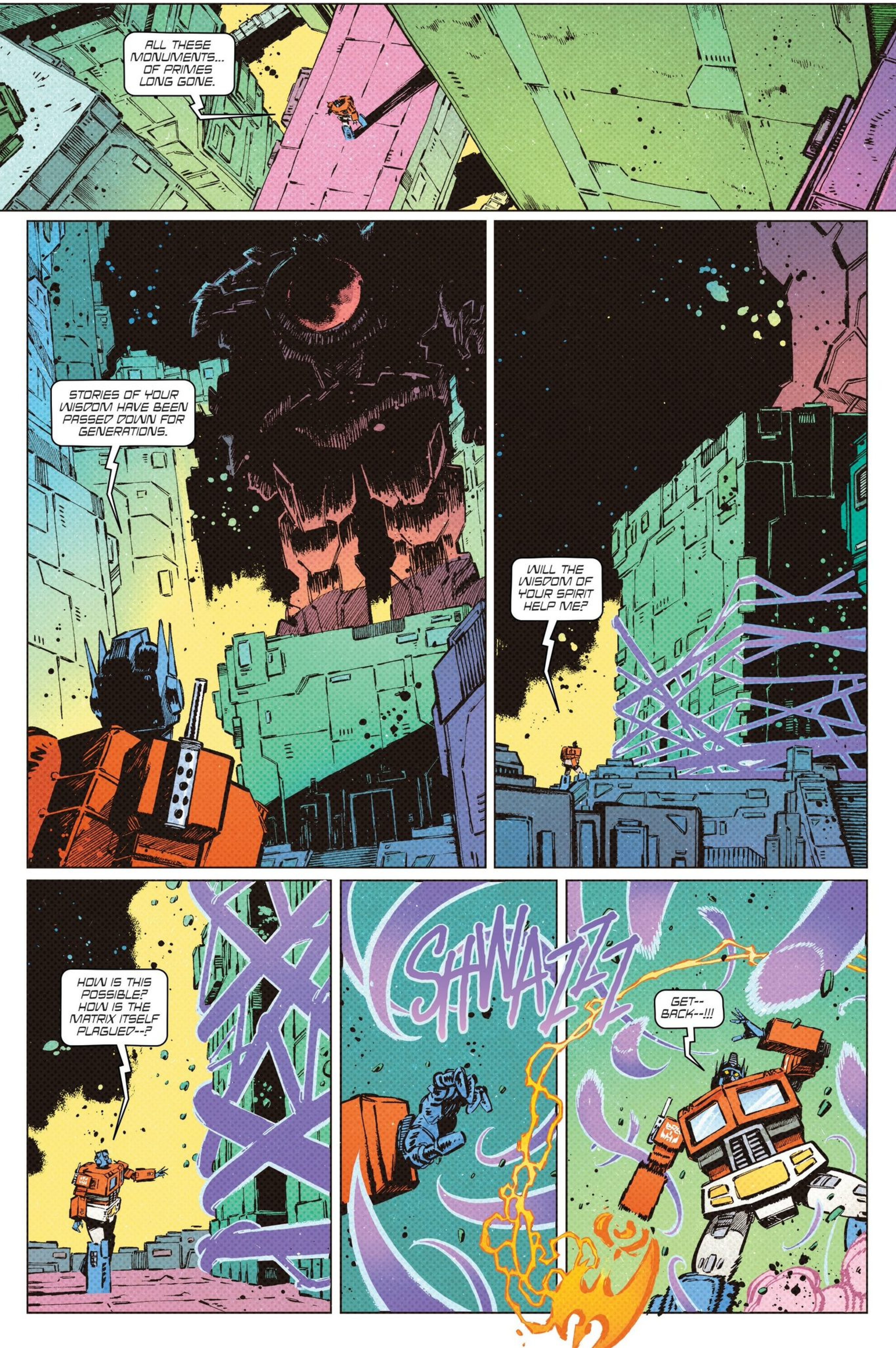
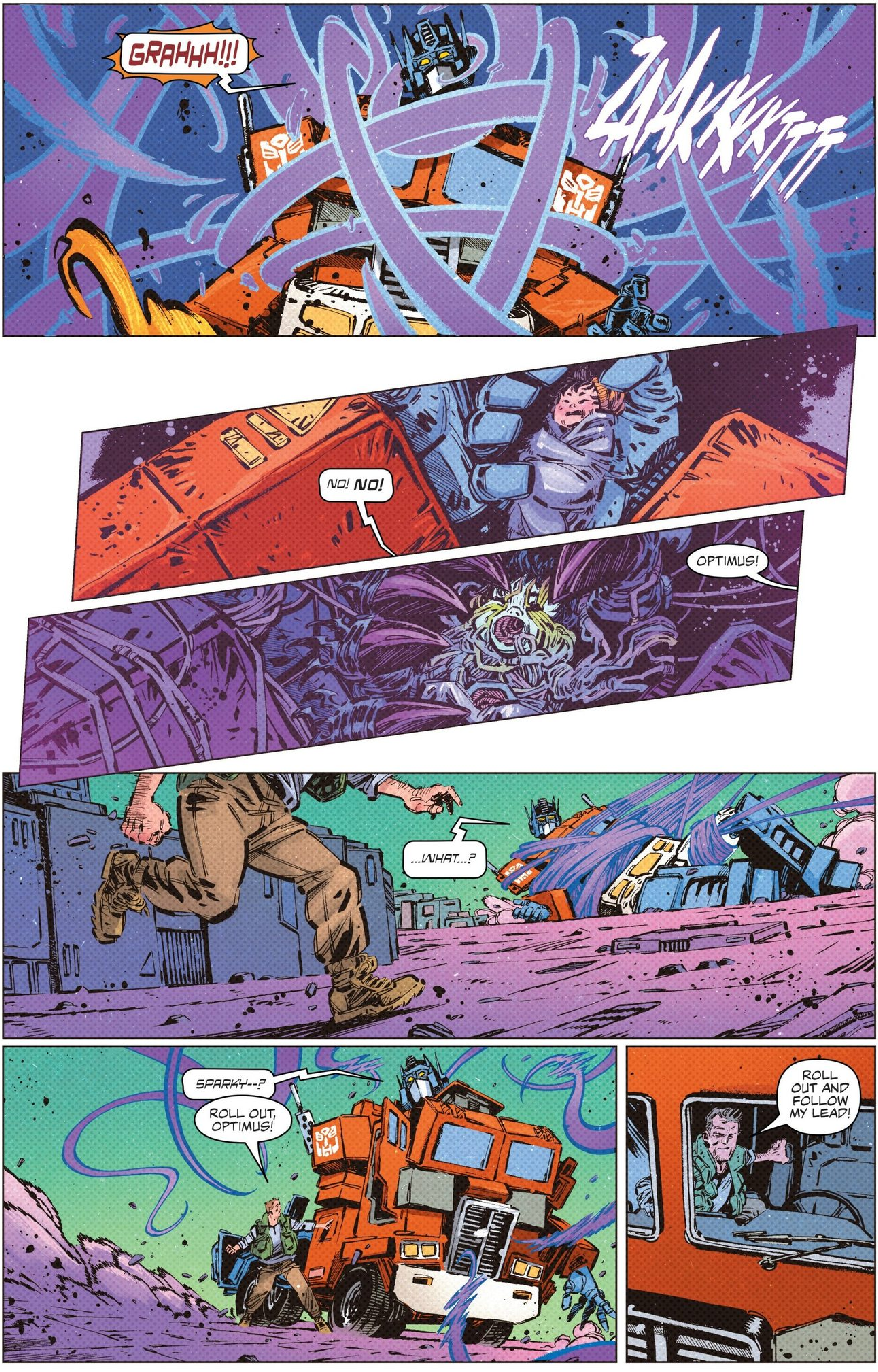
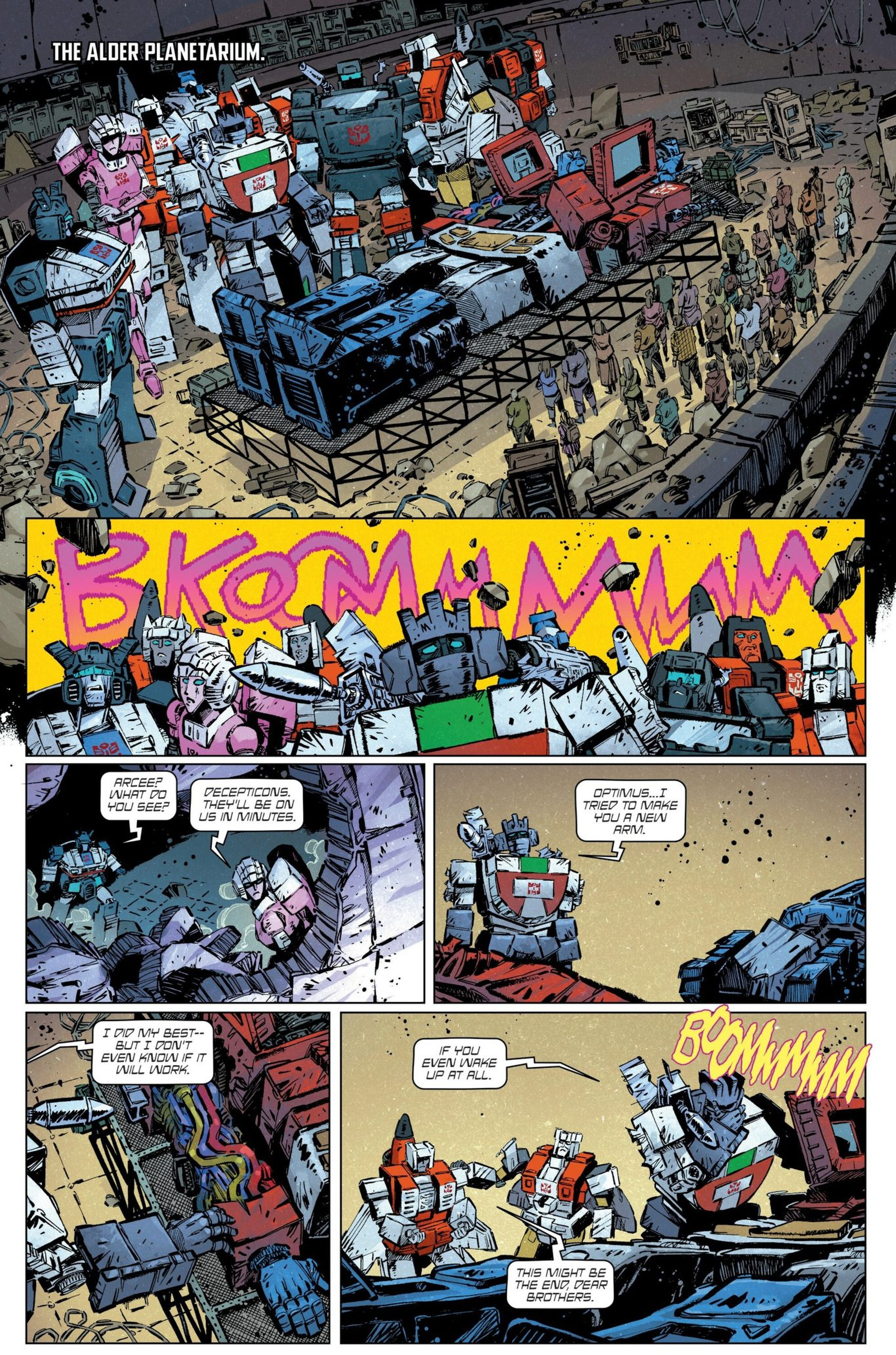

PACIFIC OCEAN.
SHKZZZZ
SHKAAZZZ
SHZZZAAAKTZZZ
GYAHHH!!!
POW
SSSSS
KHEE KAH KOKO KHEE
"WE MUST FALL BACK!!!"

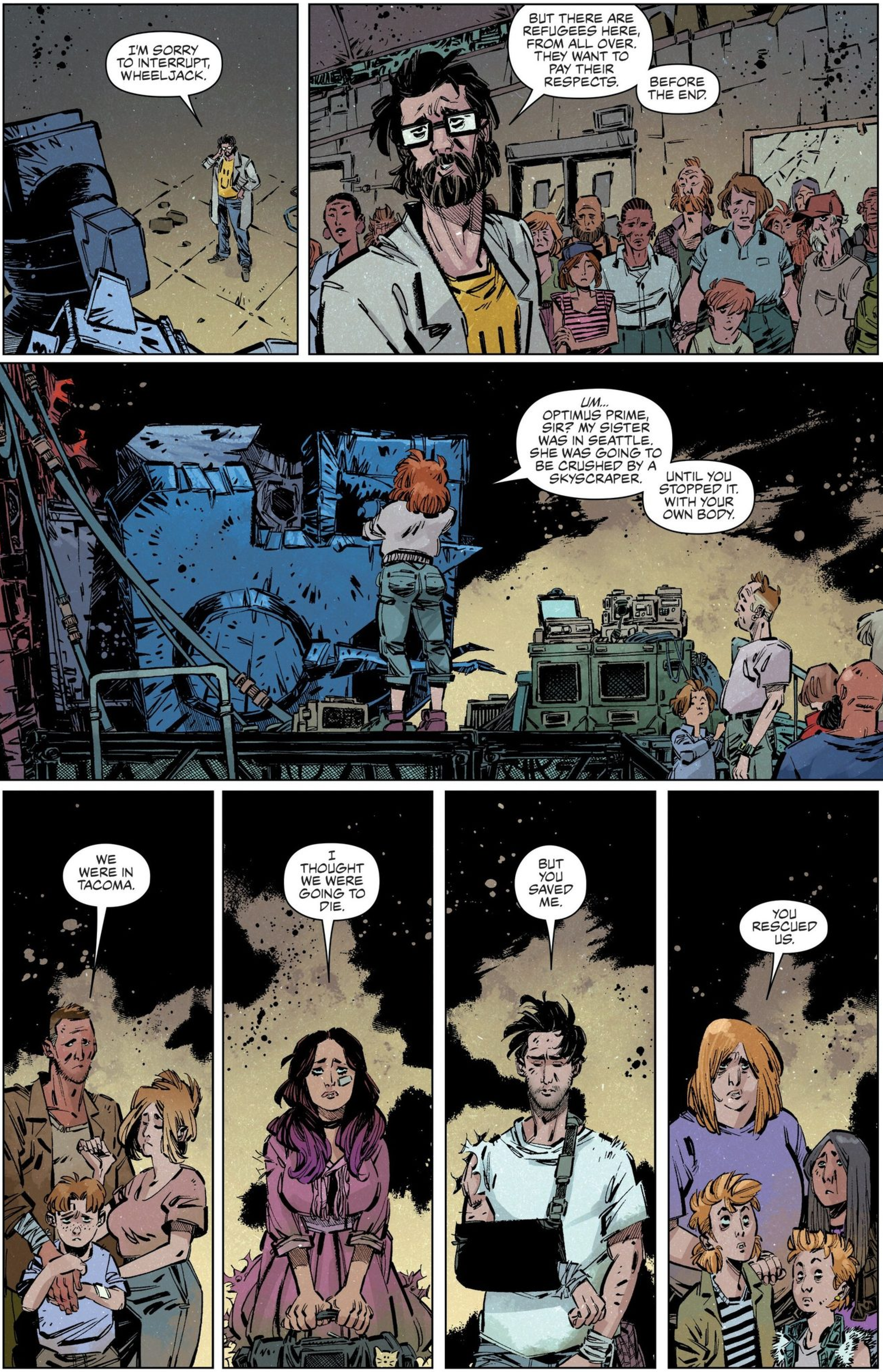

CHICAGO.
I CAN'T HOLD IT FOR MUCH LONGER!
MY LORD MEGATRON!!!! I HAVE FOUND THEM!
KHEE
DECEPTICONS! TO MEEE!
PEEW PEEW PEEW
KHEE
I THINK THAT'S THE LAST OF THE HUMANS FROM THE NORTH SIDE OF THE CITY! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
MEGATRON WILL BE COMING FOR OPTIMUS. WE'VE GOT TO GET SOME DISTANCE FROM ALL THESE PEOPLE!
I THINK I SEE THE PERFECT PLACE, WHEELJACK!
GUIDE US IN, SILVERBOLT!

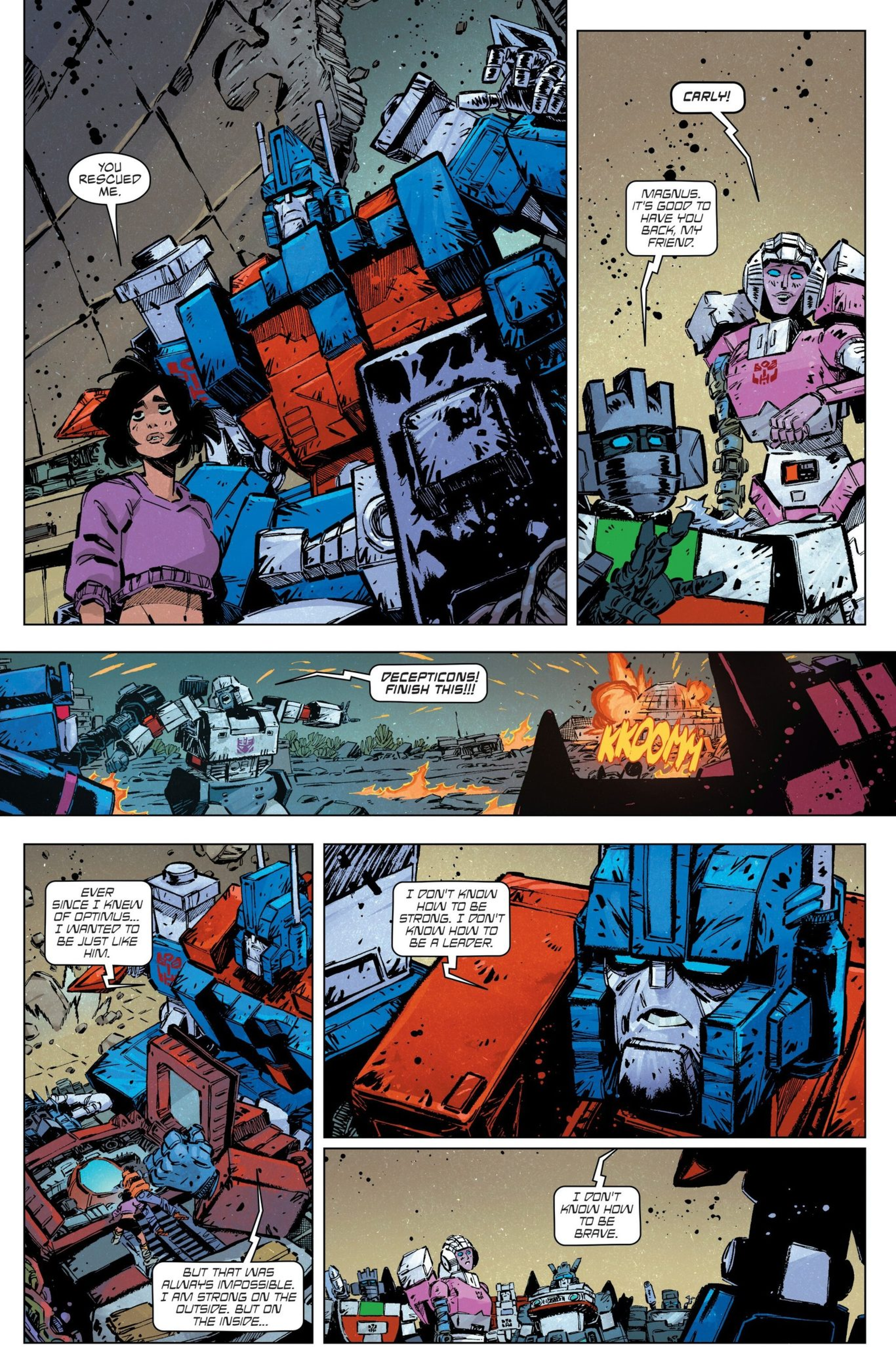

"WE'LL MAKE OUR FINAL STAND THERE."
MEGATRON, DID YOU HEAR?!
FOUND THE AUTOBOTS! THEY'RE JUST DOWN THERE, THEY--
A WEEK OF FOLLOWING THEM. HUNTING THEM. QUIETLY. AND IN ONE MOMENT, YOU'VE RUINED IT ALL. OUR PLANS OF A SURPRISE ATTACK ARE NOW GONE.
MY LORD, THE HUMAN MILITARY DEFENDING THE CITY IS COMPLETELY DEFEATED. SHOULD WE CONTINUE KILLING INNOCENT HUMANS? IT WILL WRECK THE AUTOBOTS' MORALE.
THEY ALREADY KNOW THEIR CAUSE IS HOPELESS. IT IS NOW TIME FOR OPTIMUS'S MOST NECESSARY LESSON.
ALL FORCES, MOVE IN.

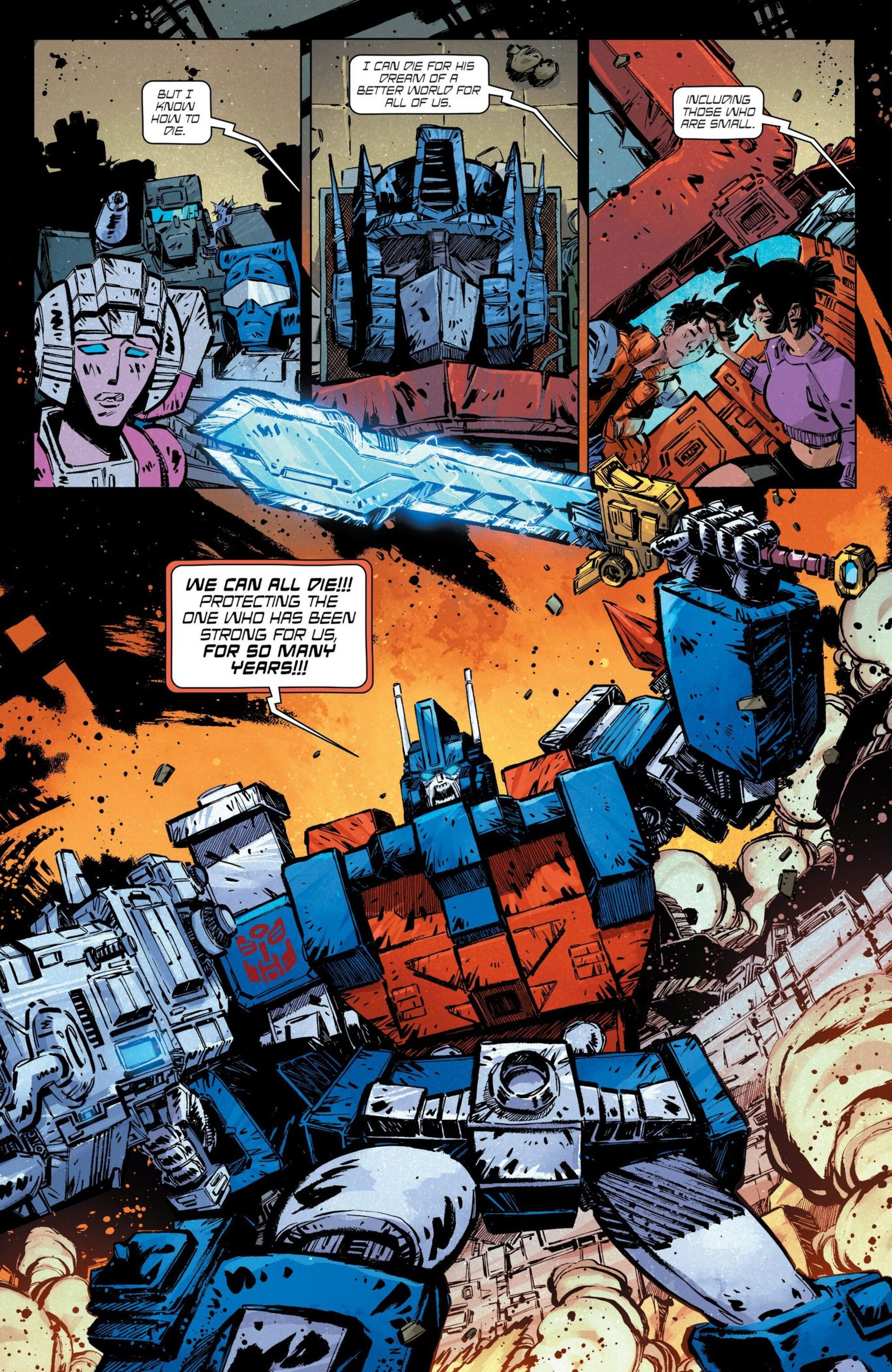

ALL THESE MONUMENTS... OF PRIMES LONG GONE.
STORIES OF YOUR WISDOM HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS.
WILL THE WISDOM OF YOUR SPIRIT HELP ME?
HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? HOW IS THE MATRIX ITSELF PLAGUED--?
SHWAZZZ
GET-- BACK--!!!

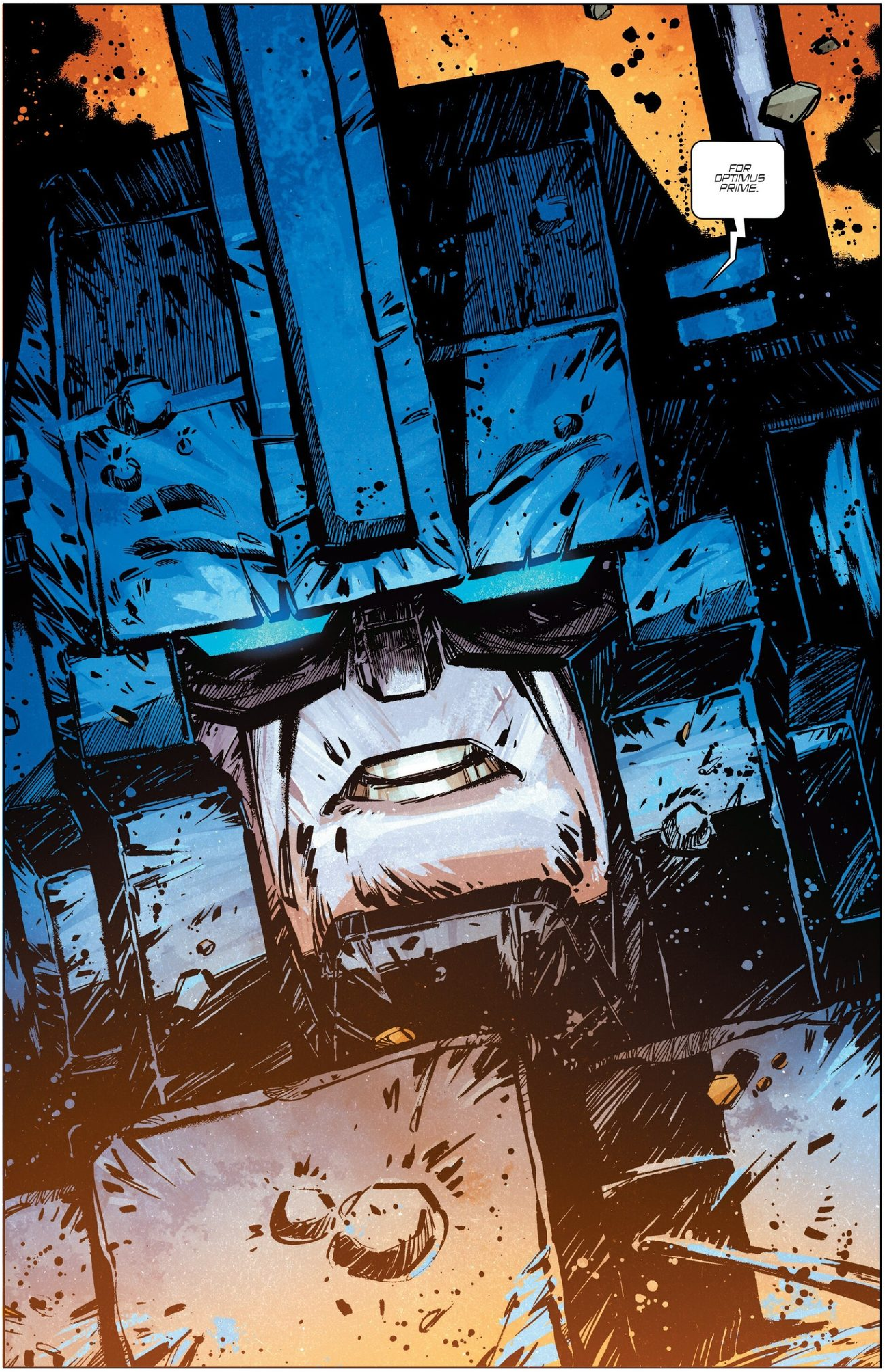

GRAHHH!!!
ZAAKKKTTT
NO! NO!
OPTIMUS!
...WHAT...?
SPARKY--?
ROLL OUT, OPTIMUS!
ROLL OUT AND FOLLOW MY LEAD!

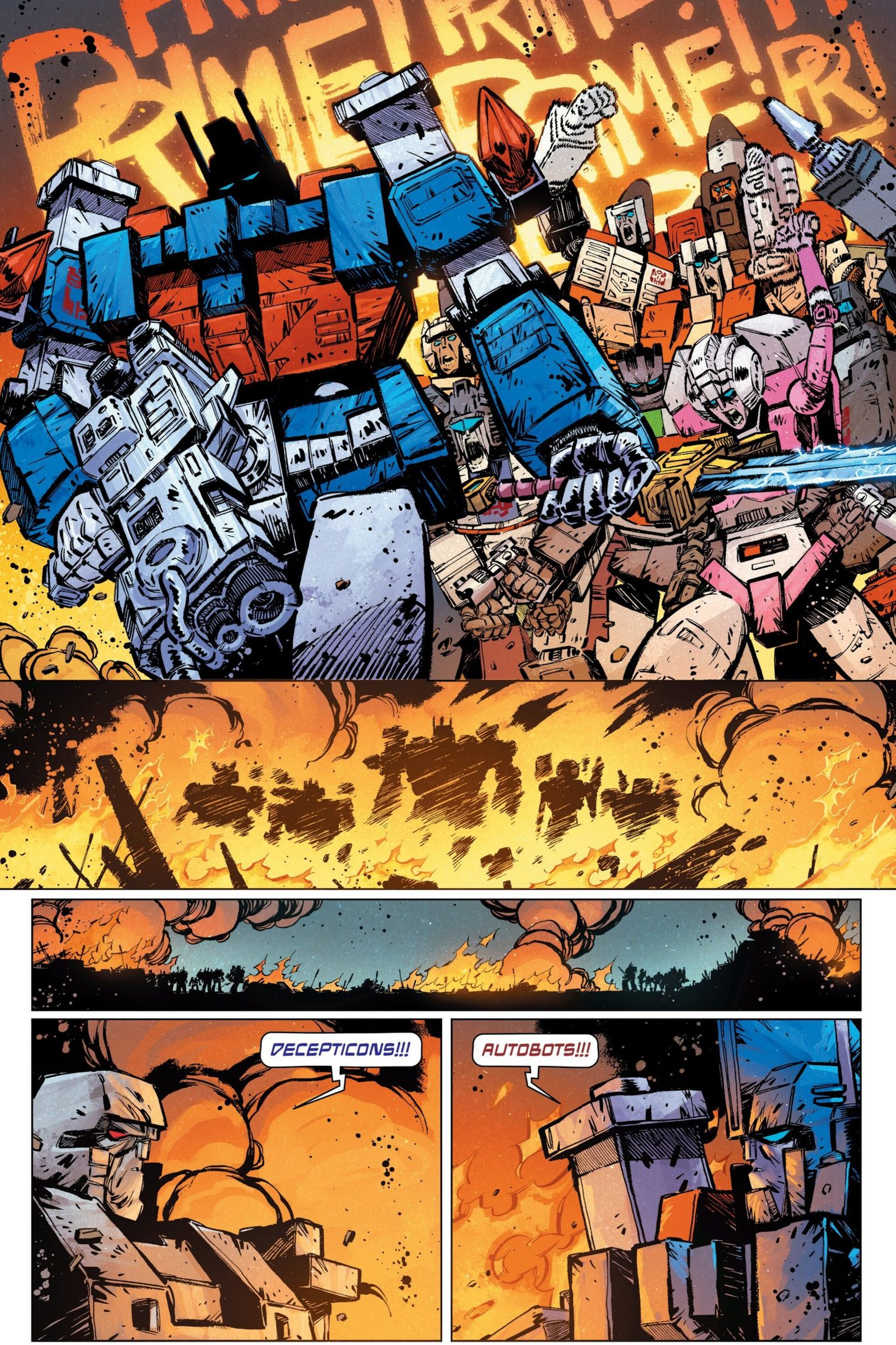

THE ALDER PLANETARIUM.
BKOOMMMMM
ARCEE? WHAT DO YOU SEE?
DECEPTICONS. THEY'LL BE ON US IN MINUTES.
OPTIMUS...I TRIED TO MAKE YOU A NEW ARM.
I DID MY BEST-- BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT WILL WORK.
IF YOU EVEN WAKE UP AT ALL.
BOOMMMMM
THIS MIGHT BE THE END, DEAR BROTHERS.

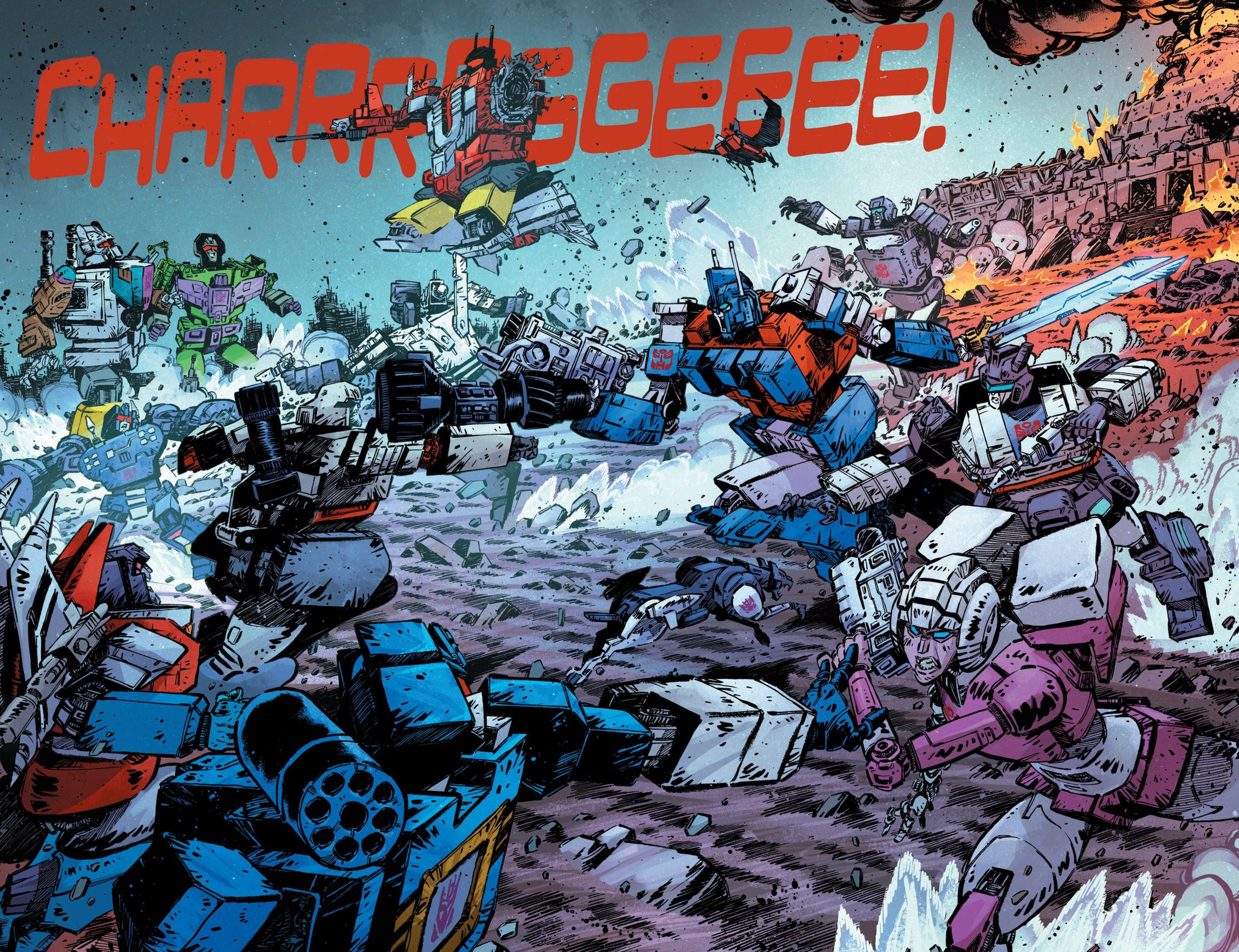

I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT, WHEELJACK.
BUT THERE ARE REFUGEES HERE, FROM ALL OVER. THEY WANT TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS.
BEFORE THE END.
UM... OPTIMUS PRIME, SIR? MY SISTER WAS IN SEATTLE. SHE WAS GOING TO BE CRUSHED BY A SKYSCRAPER.
UNTIL YOU STOPPED IT. WITH YOUR OWN BODY.
WE WERE IN TACOMA.
I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO DIE.
BUT YOU SAVED ME.
YOU RESCUED US.

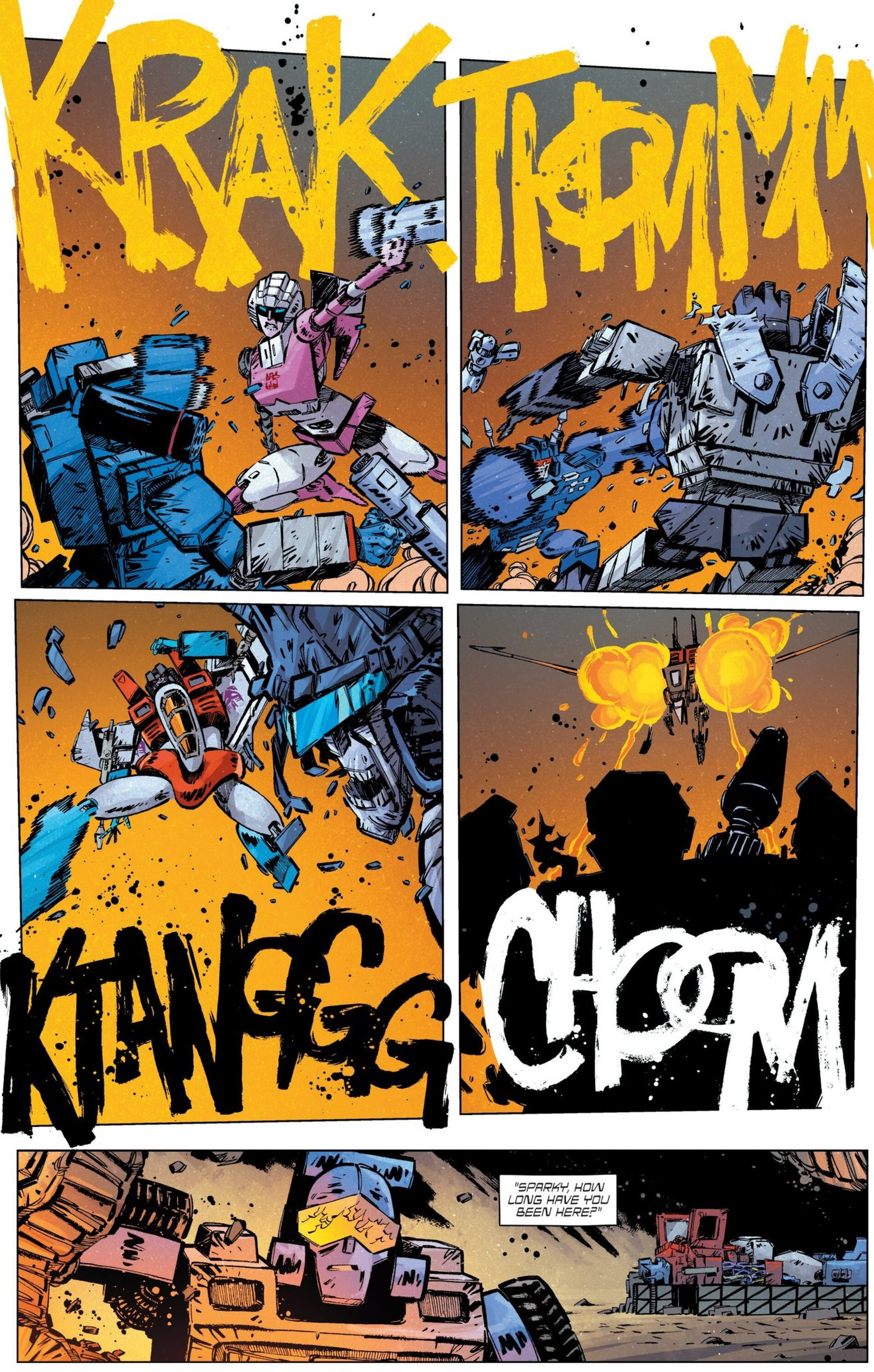

YOU RESCUED ME.
CARLY!
MAGNUS. IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, MY FRIEND.
DECEPTICONS! FINISH THIS!!!
KKOOMM
EVER SINCE I KNEW OF OPTIMUS... I WANTED TO BE JUST LIKE HIM.
BUT THAT WAS ALWAYS IMPOSSIBLE. I AM STRONG ON THE OUTSIDE. BUT ON THE INSIDE...
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE STRONG. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE A LEADER.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE BRAVE.

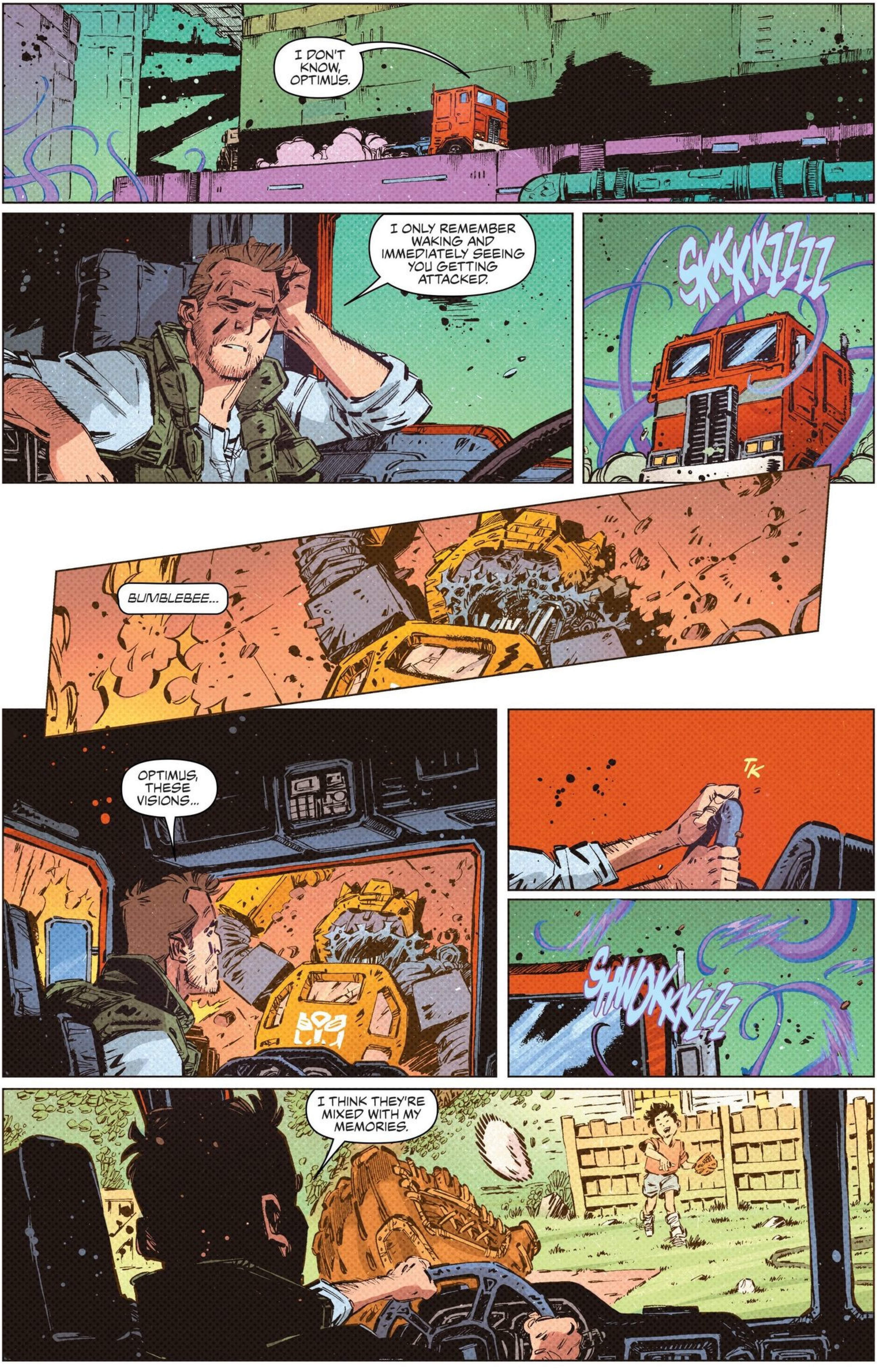

BUT I KNOW HOW TO DIE.
I CAN DIE FOR HIS DREAM OF A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL OF US.
INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE SMALL.
WE CAN ALL DIE!!! PROTECTING THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN STRONG FOR US, FOR SO MANY YEARS!!!

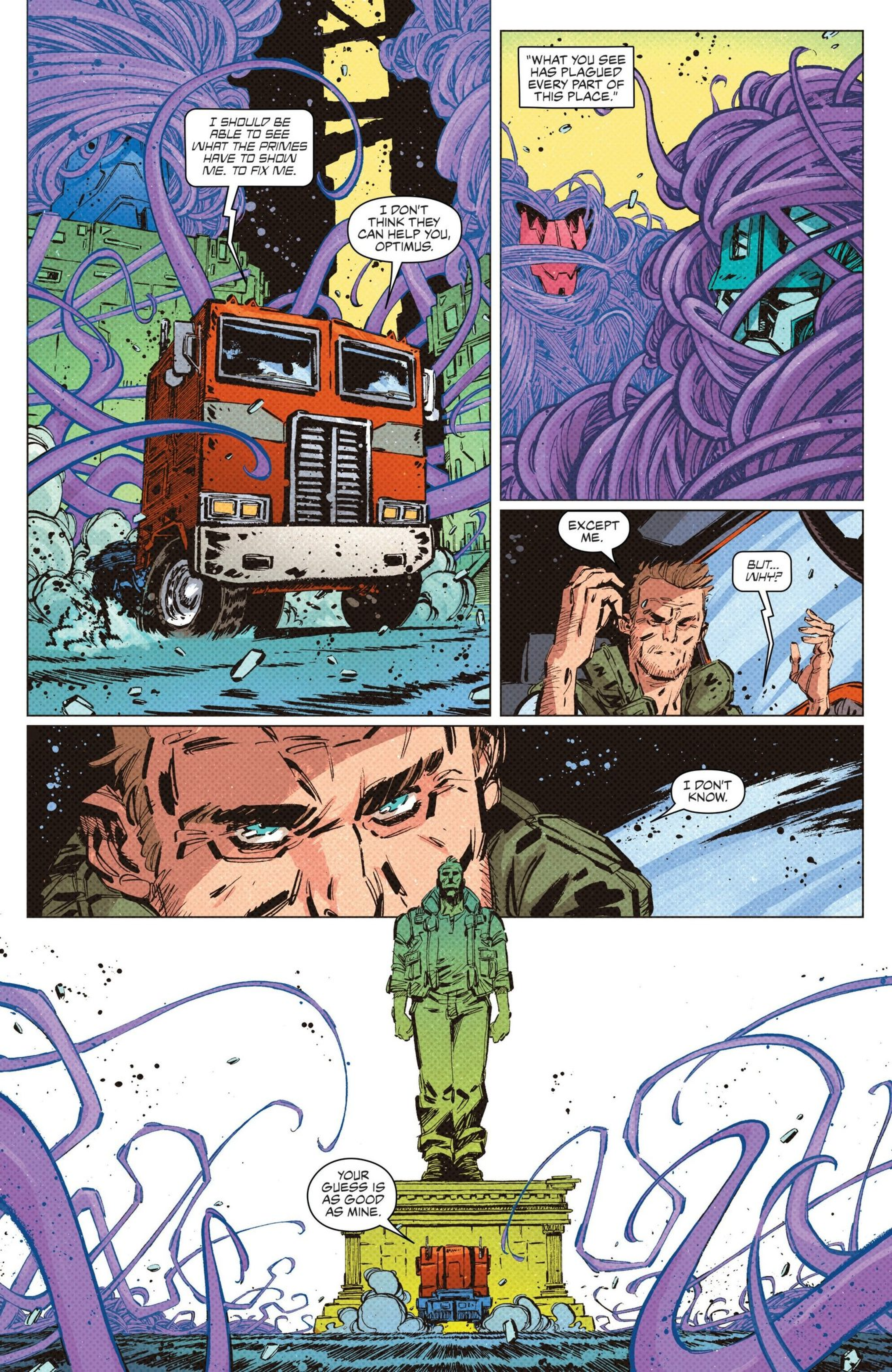

FOR OPTIMUS PRIME.

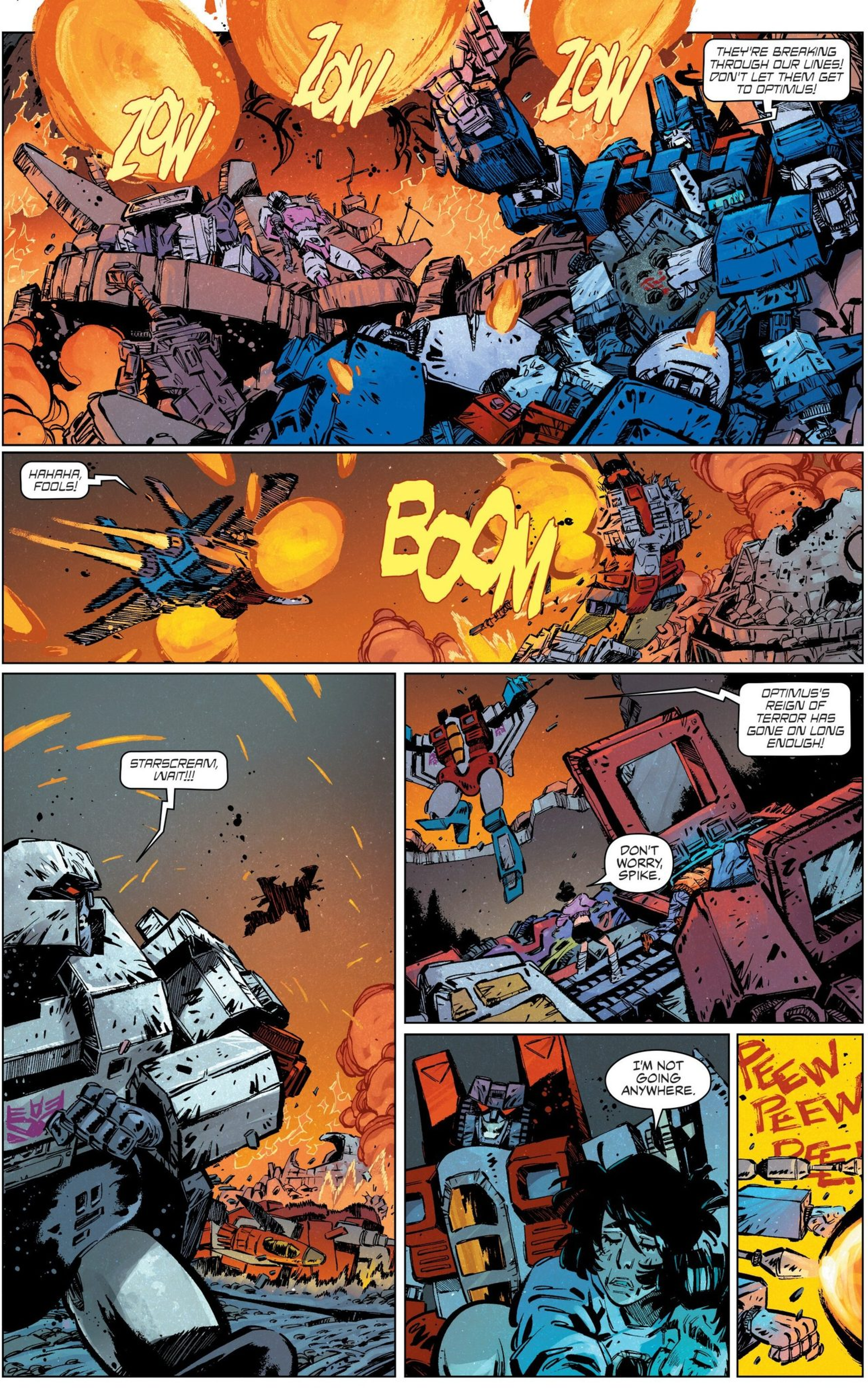

PRIME! PRIME! PRIME!
DECEPTICONS!!!
AUTOBOTS!!!

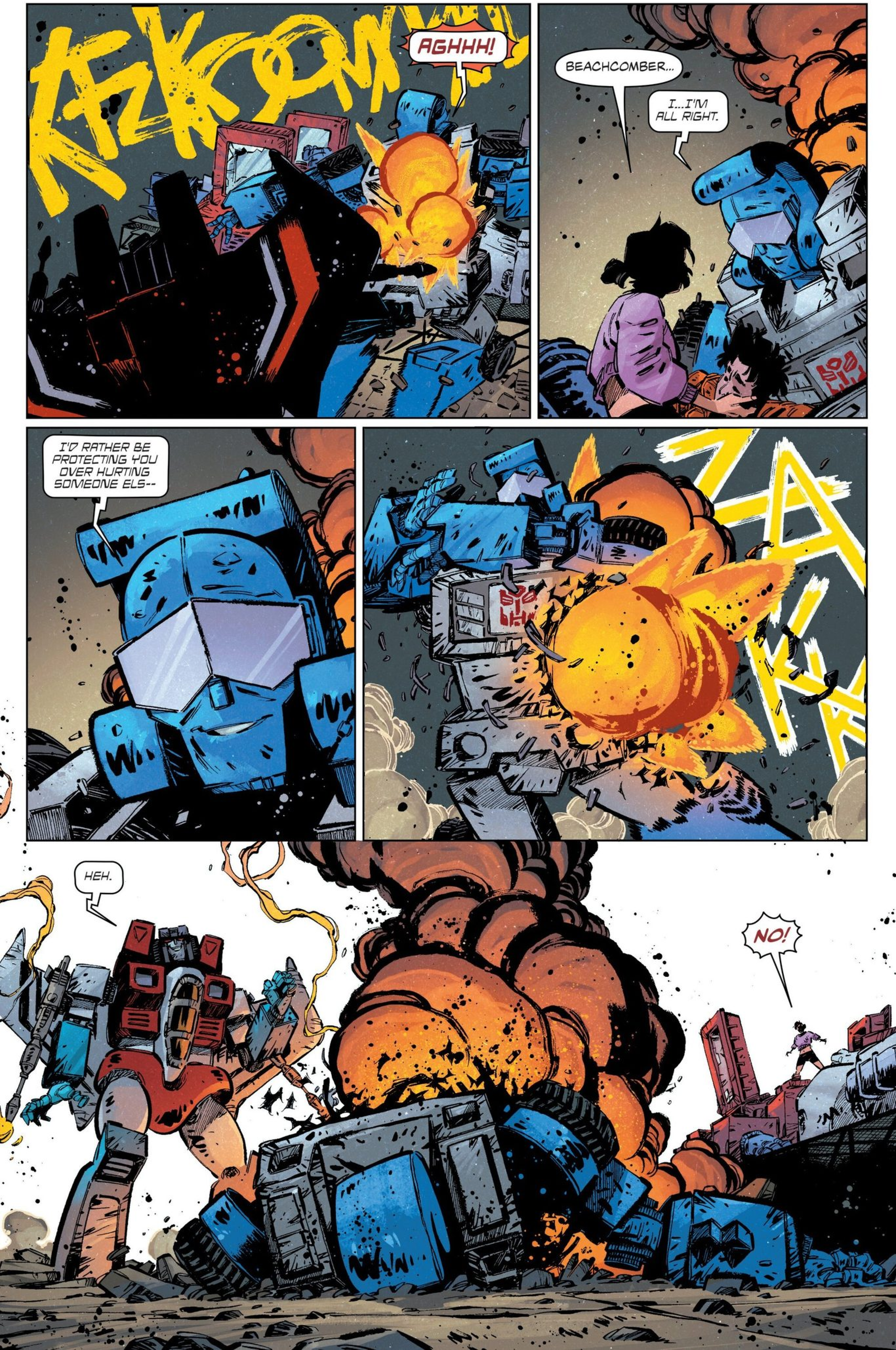

CHARRRRGGEEEE!

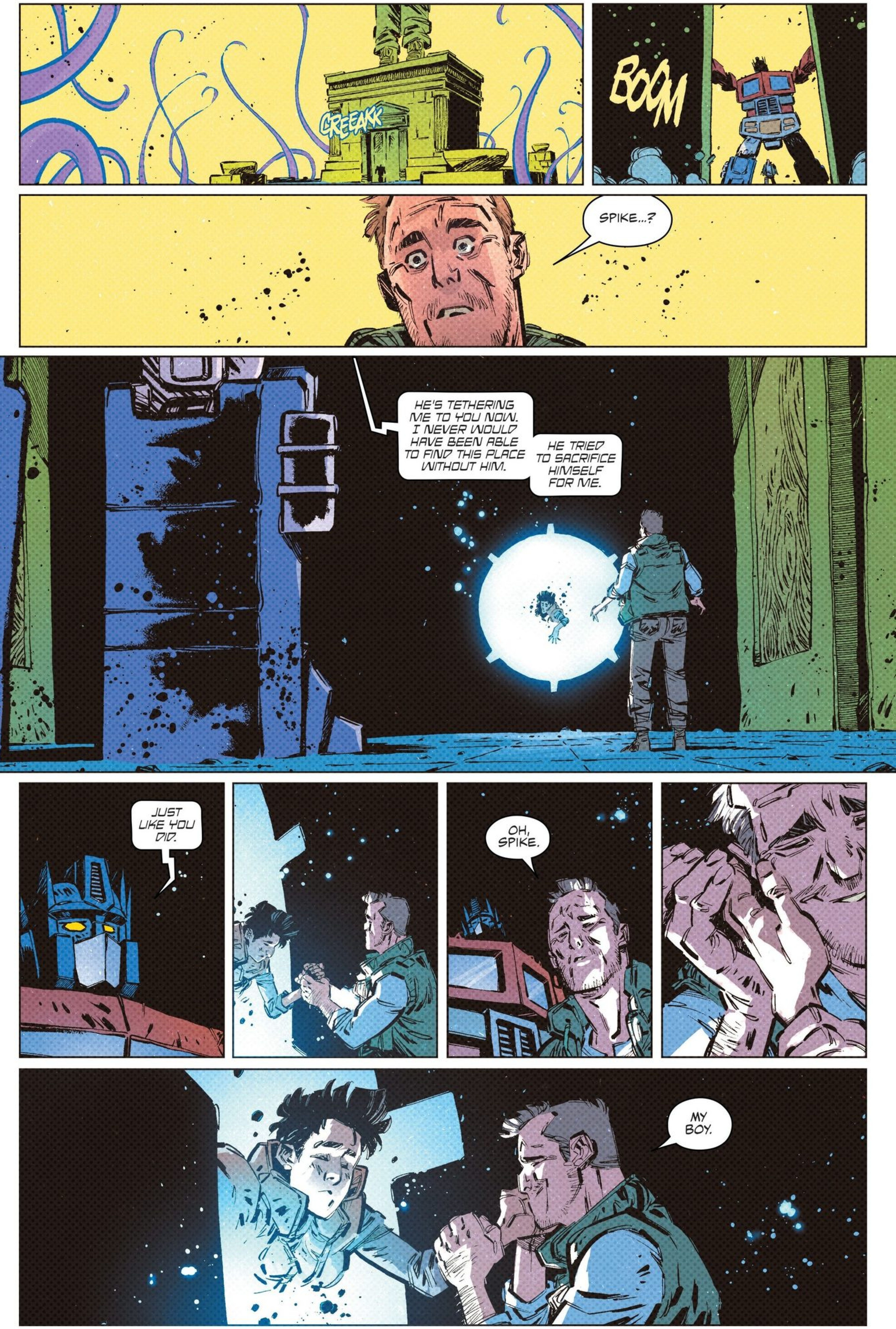

KRAK!
THOOMM
KLANGG
CHOOM
"SPARKY, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?"

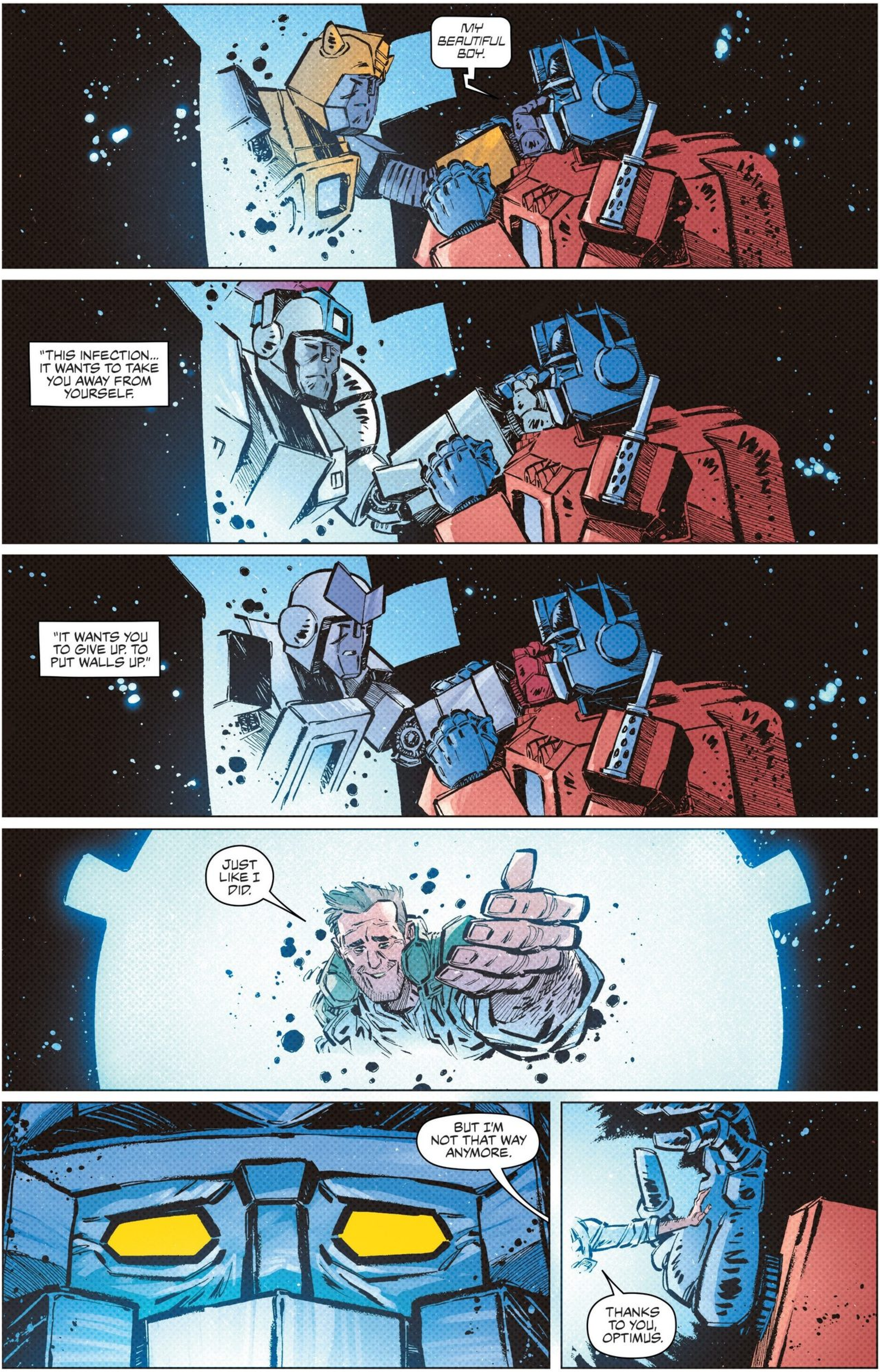

I DON'T KNOW, OPTIMUS.
I ONLY REMEMBER WAKING AND IMMEDIATELY SEEING YOU GETTING ATTACKED.
SKKKKZZZZ
BUMBLEBEE...
OPTIMUS, THESE VISIONS...
TK
SHWOKKKZZZZ
I THINK THEY'RE MIXED WITH MY MEMORIES.

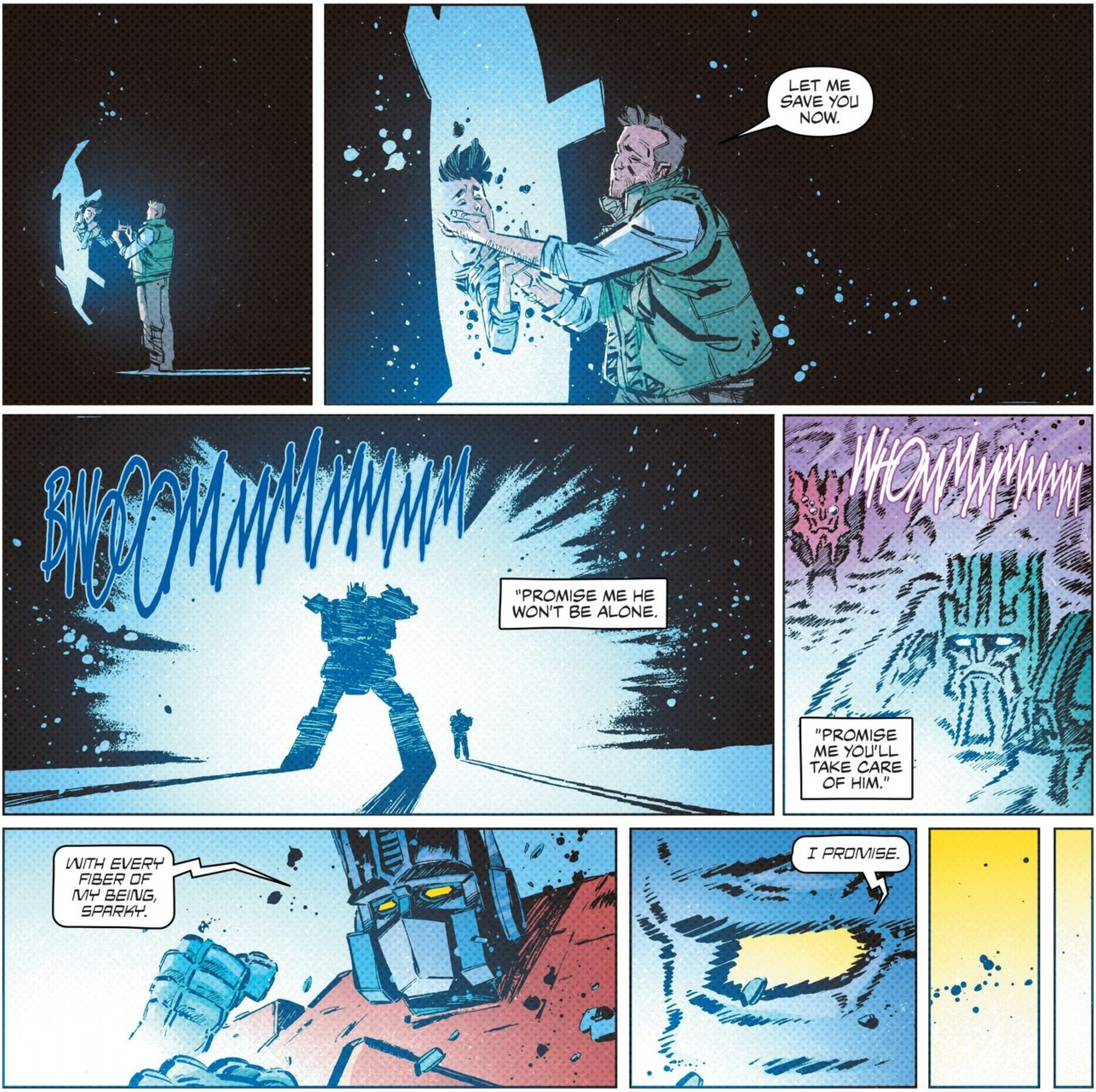

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT THE PRIMES HAVE TO SHOW ME. TO FIX ME.
I DON'T THINK THEY CAN HELP YOU, OPTIMUS.
"WHAT YOU SEE HAS PLAGUED EVERY PART OF THIS PLACE."
EXCEPT ME.
BUT... WHY?
I DON'T KNOW.
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.

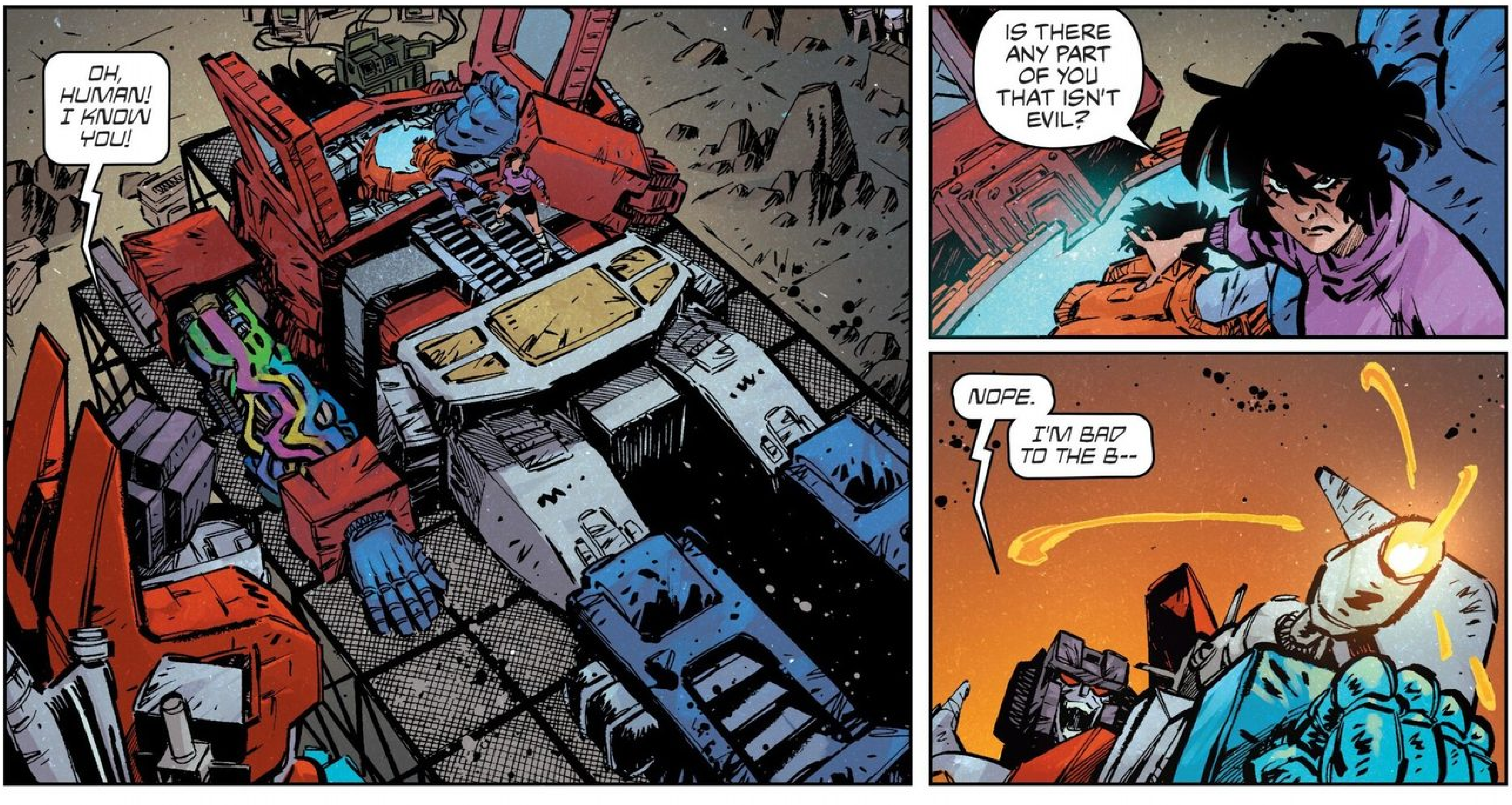

ZOW
ZOW
ZOW
THEY'RE BREAKING THROUGH OUR LINES! DON'T LET THEM GET TO OPTIMUS!
HAHAHA, FOOLS!
BOOM
STARSCREAM, WAIT!!!
OPTIMUS'S REIGN OF TERROR HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH!
DON'T WORRY, SPIKE.
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
PEEW
PEEW
PEE

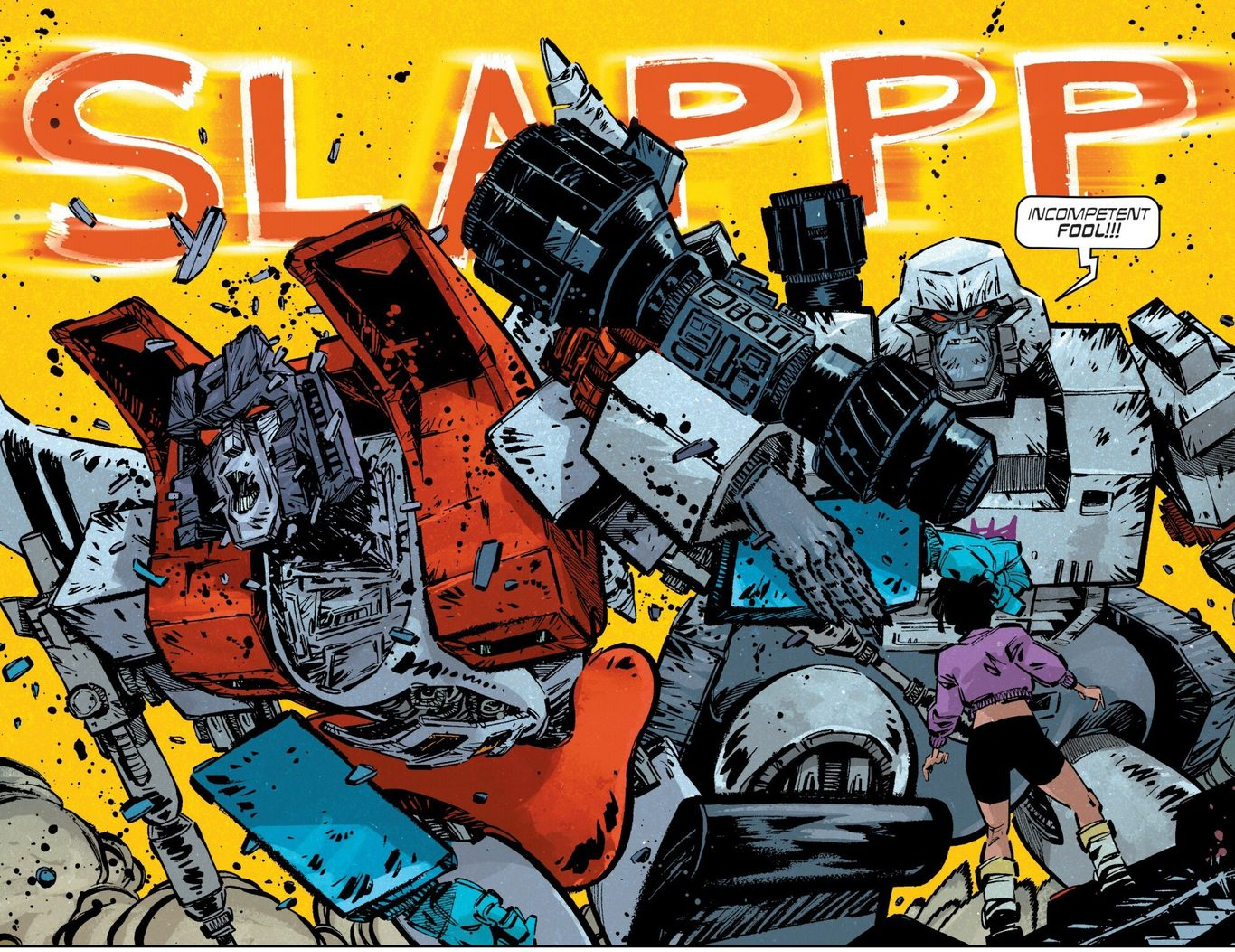

KRKOOM!!
AGHHH!
BEACHCOMBER...
I...I'M ALL RIGHT.
I'D RATHER BE PROTECTING YOU OVER HURTING SOMEONE ELS--
ZAKKA
HEH.
NO!

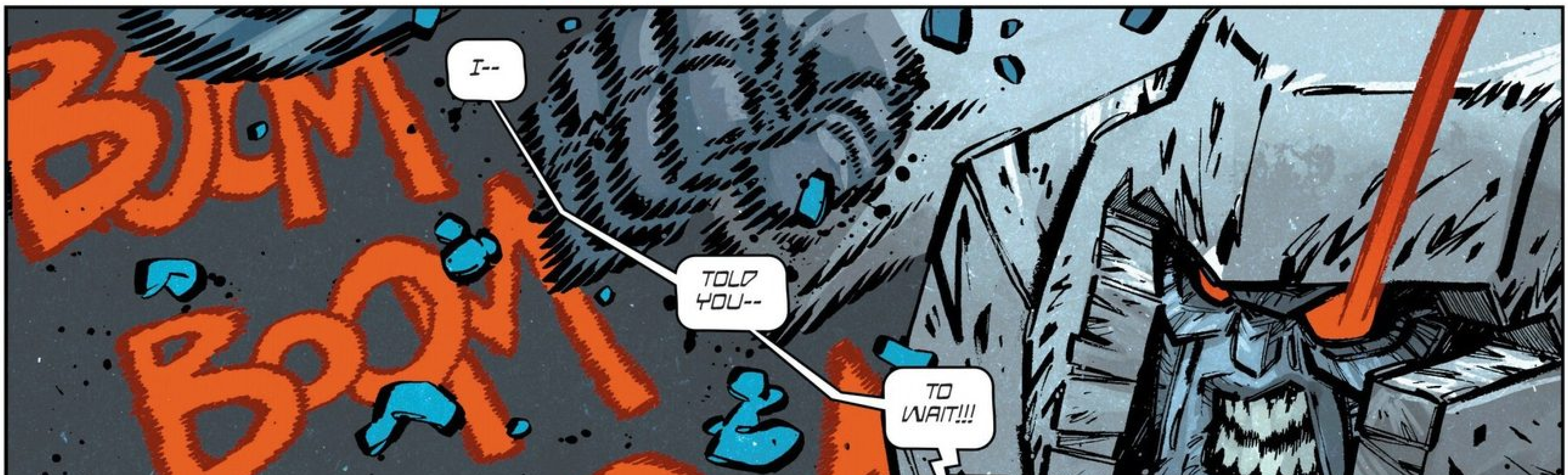

CREEAKK
BOOM
SPIKE...?
HE'S TETHERING ME TO YOU NOW. I NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND THIS PLACE WITHOUT HIM.
HE TRIED TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR ME.
JUST LIKE YOU DID.
OH, SPIKE.
MY BOY.

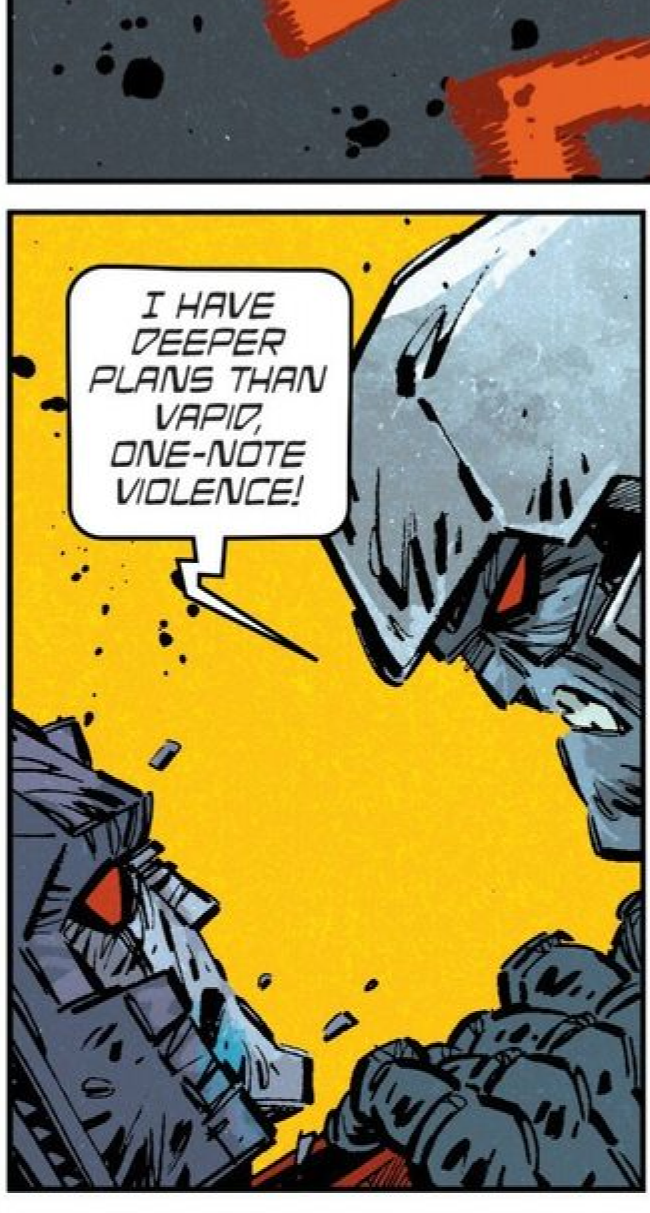

MY BEAUTIFUL BOY.
"THIS INFECTION... IT WANTS TO TAKE YOU AWAY FROM YOURSELF.
"IT WANTS YOU TO GIVE UP. TO PUT WALLS UP."
JUST LIKE I DID.
BUT I'M NOT THAT WAY ANYMORE.
THANKS TO YOU, OPTIMUS.

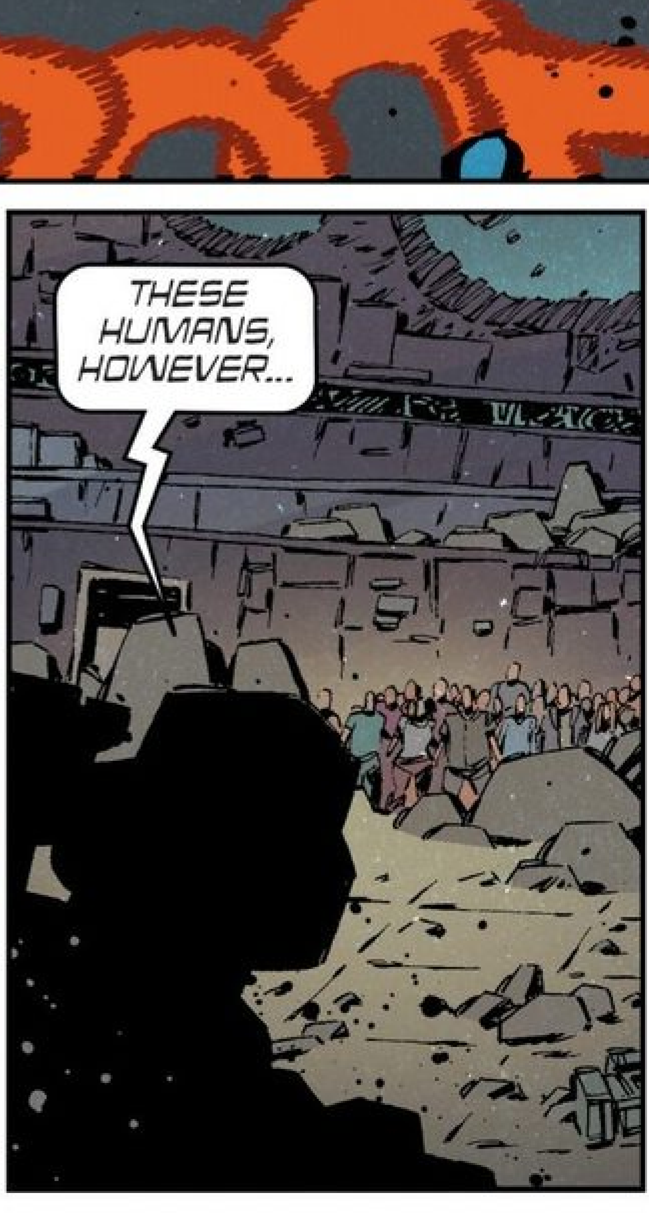

LET ME SAVE YOU NOW.
BWOOMMMMMMM
"PROMISE ME HE WON'T BE ALONE.
WHOMMMMMM
"PROMISE ME YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM."
WITH EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING, SPARKY.
I PROMISE.

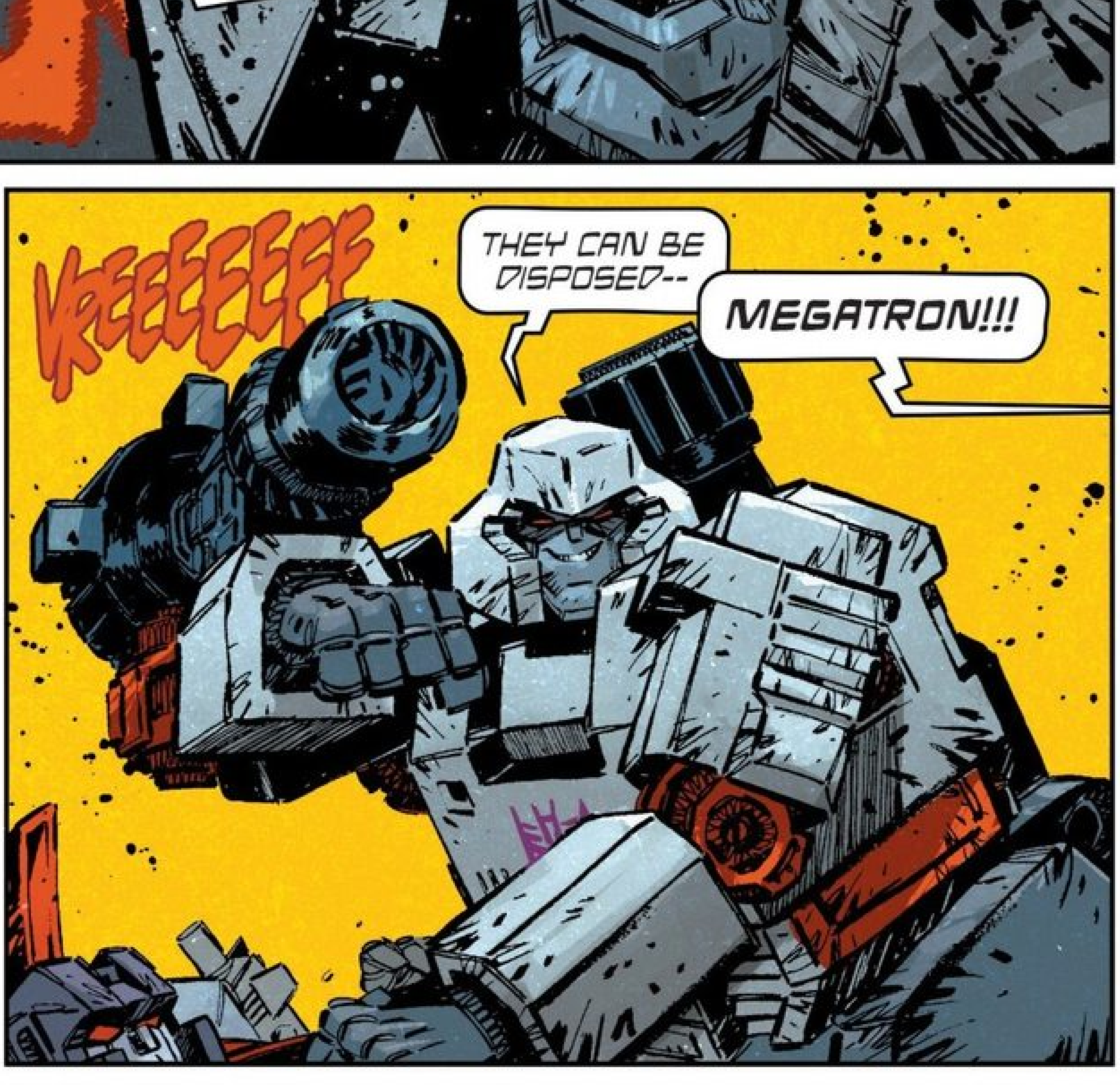

OH, HUMAN! I KNOW YOU!
IS THERE ANY PART OF YOU THAT ISN'T EVIL?
NOPE.
I'M BAD TO THE B--

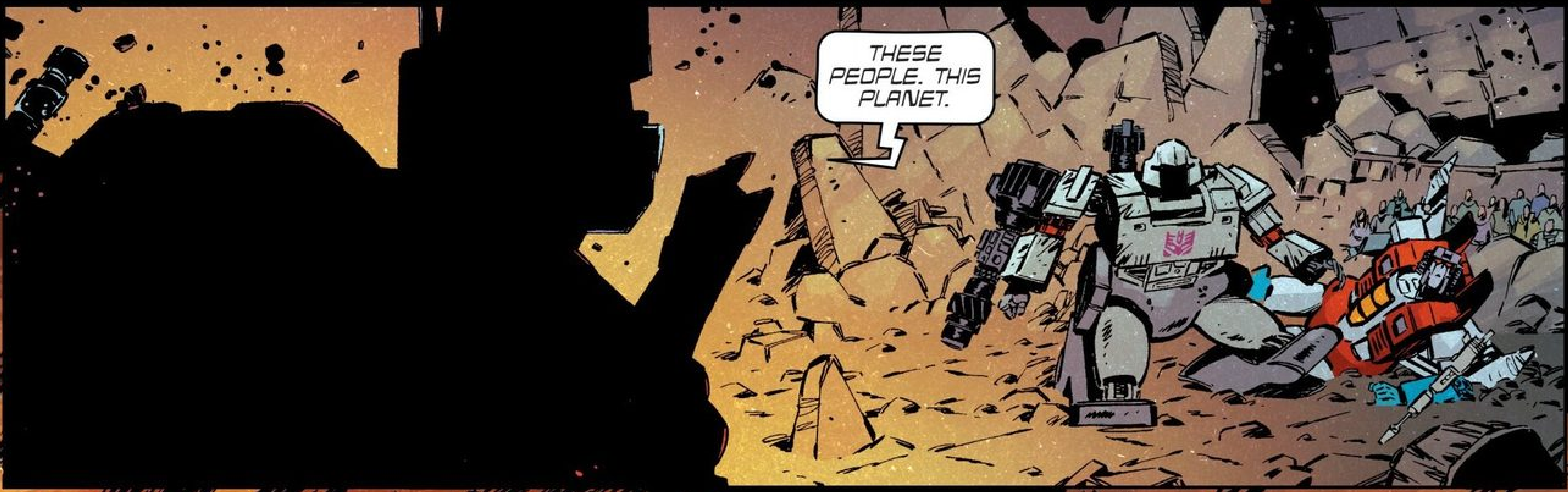

SLAPPP
INCOMPETENT FOOL!!!

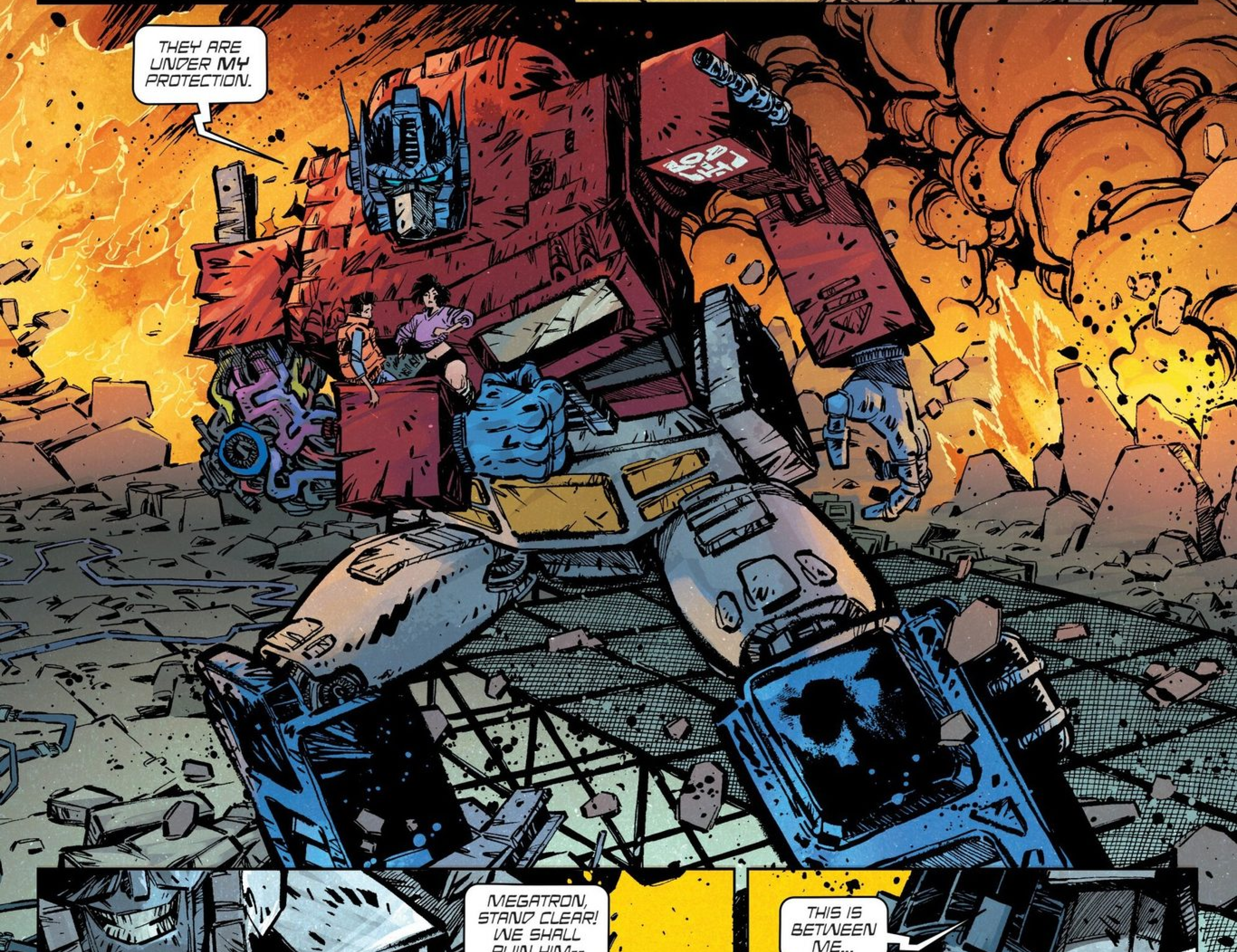

BOOM
BOOM
BOO
I--
TOLD YOU--
TO WAIT!!!

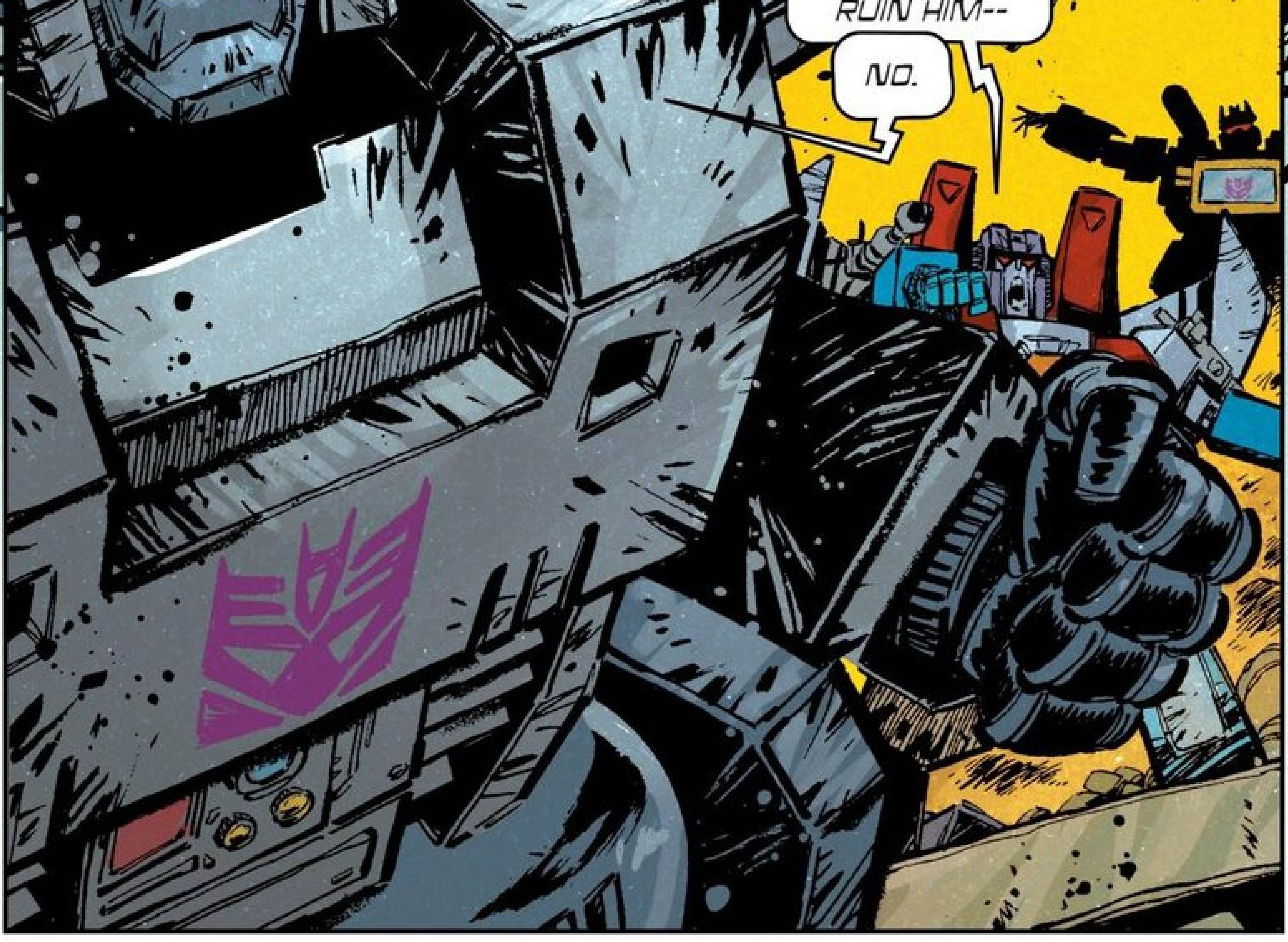

I HAVE DEEPER PLANS THAN VAPID, ONE-NOTE VIOLENCE!

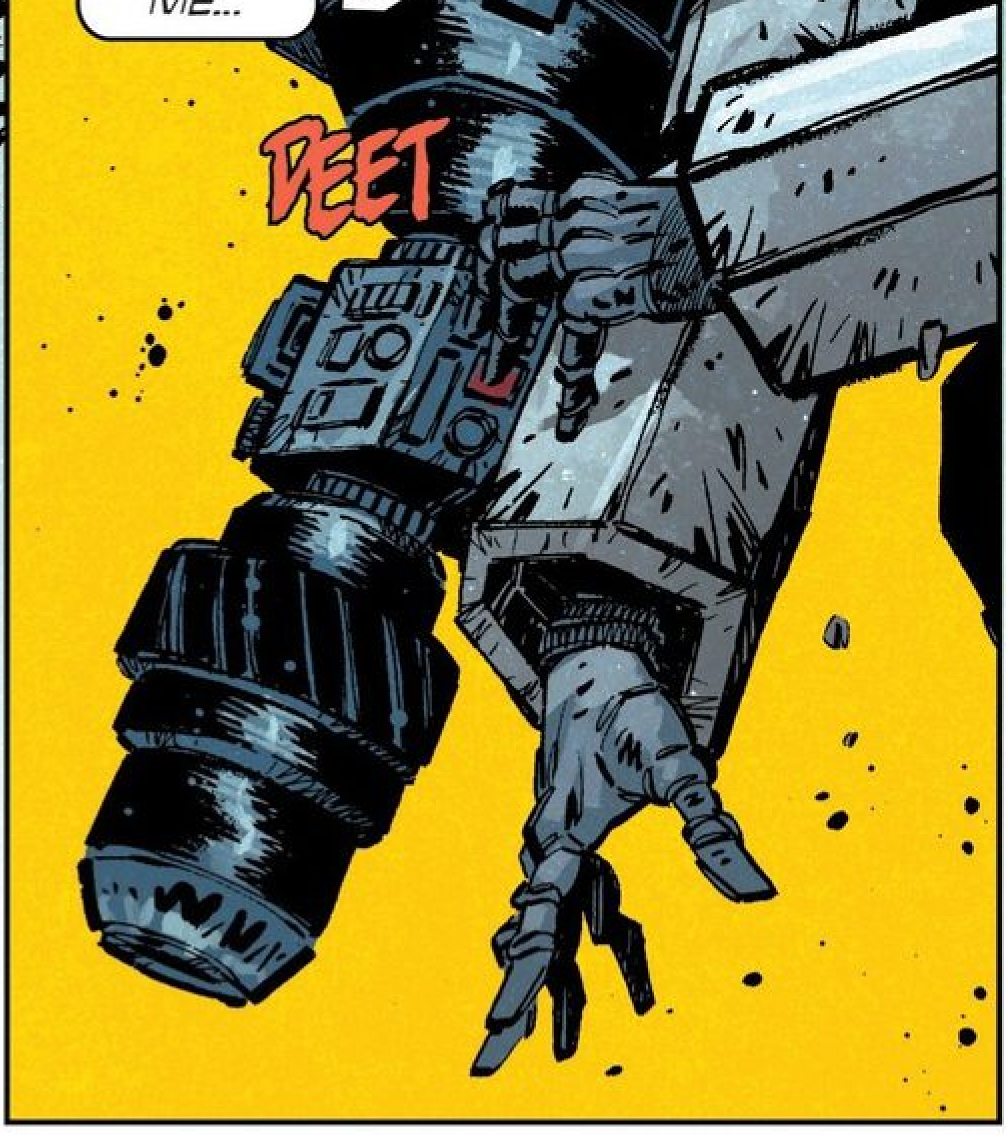

THESE HUMANS, HOWEVER...

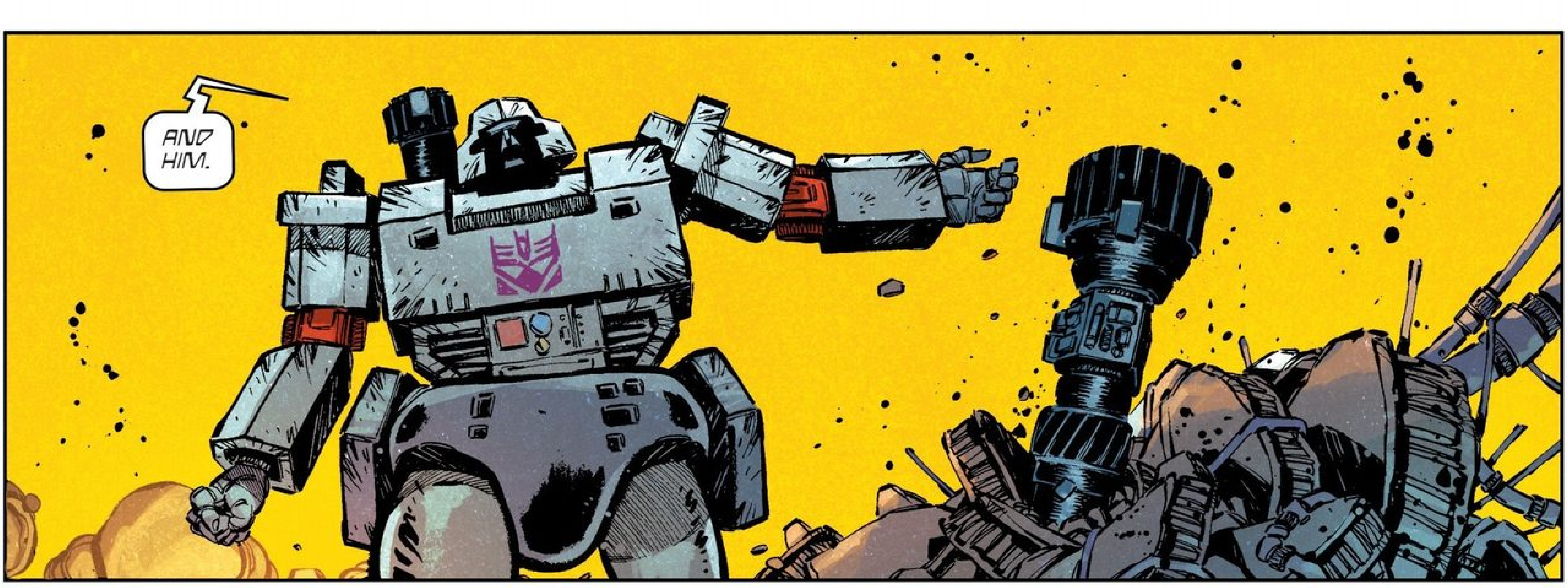

VREEEEEEFF
THEY CAN BE DISPOSED--
MEGATRON!!!

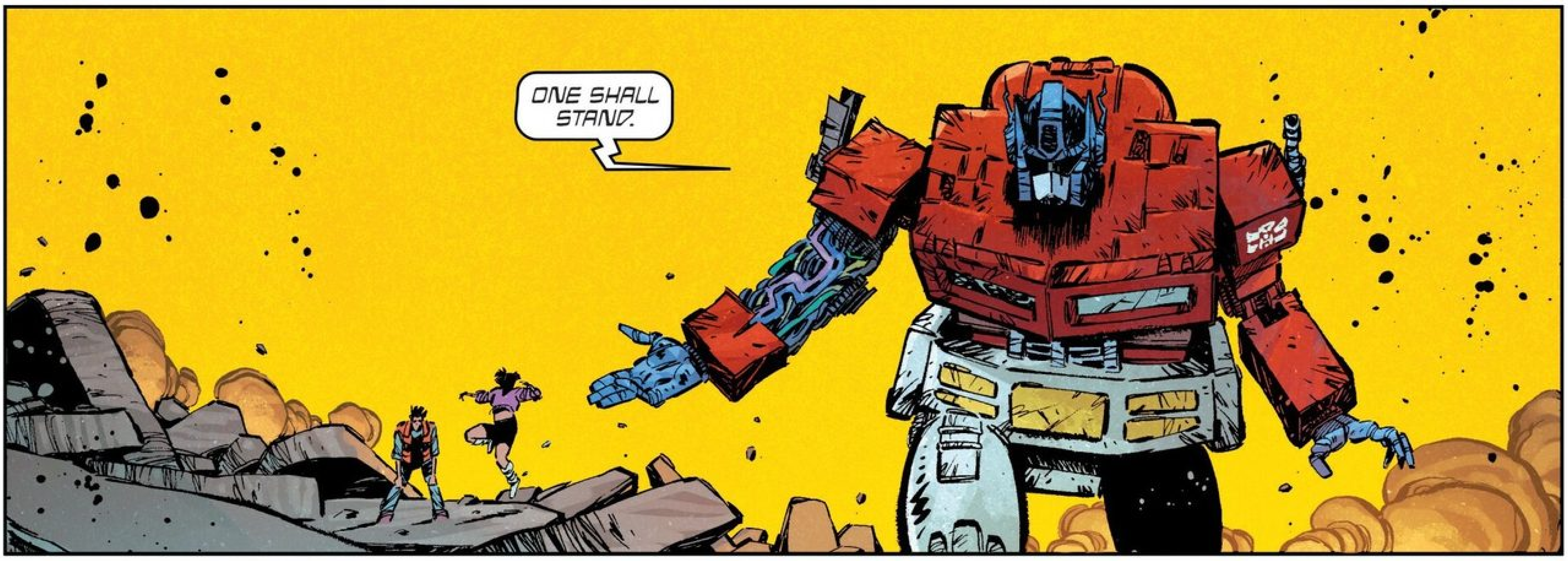

THESE PEOPLE. THIS PLANET.

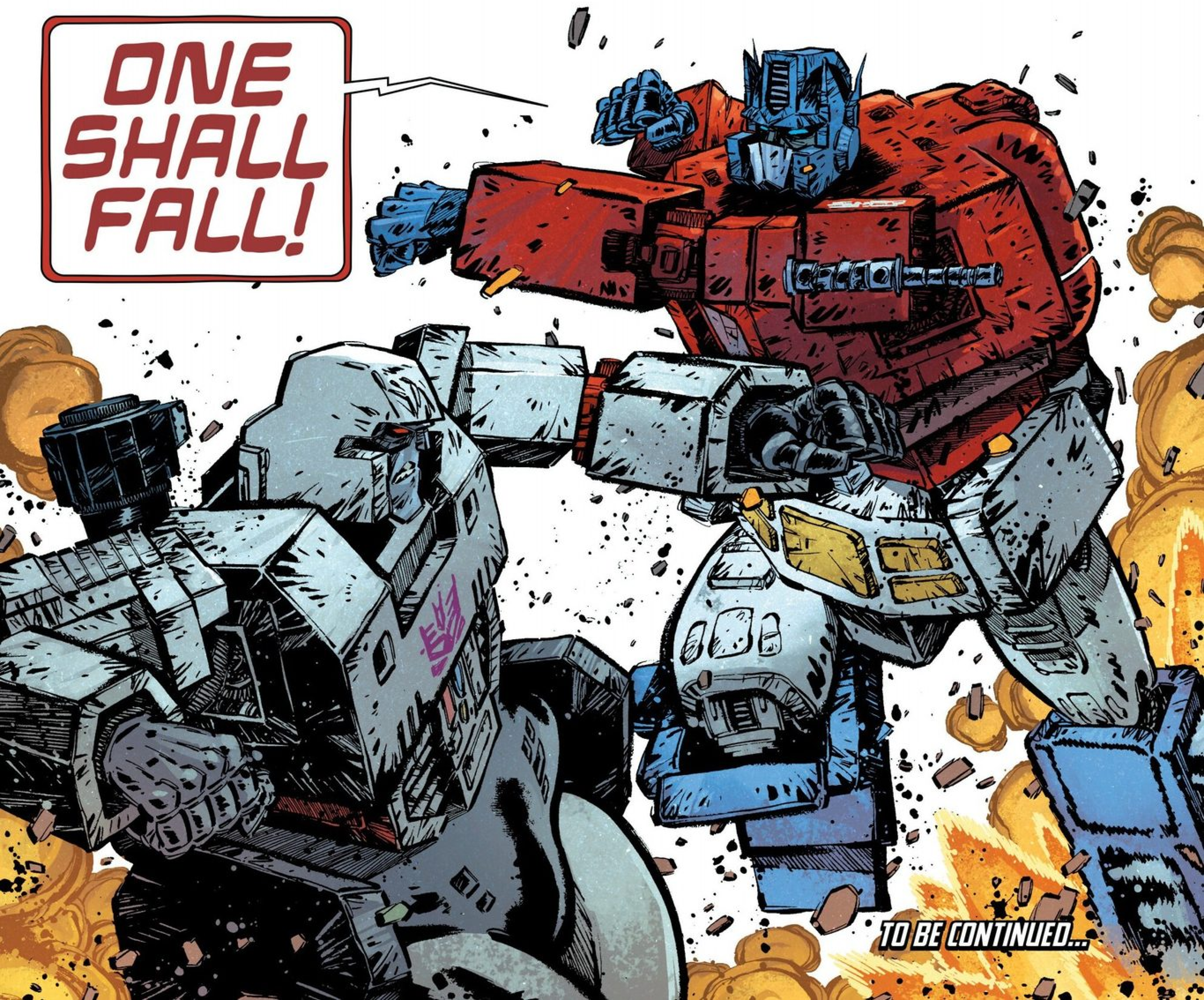

THEY ARE UNDER **MY** PROTECTION.


MEGATRON, STAND CLEAR! WE SHALL RUIN HIM--
NO.


THIS IS BETWEEN ME...
DEET




ONE SHALL STAND.


ONE SHALL FALL!

TO BE CONTINUED...

THE MATRIX OF LETTERSHIP

SE D LETTERS TO
FORMERS@SKYBOUND.COM

O e shall stand...one shall fall! And the en on Universe will never be the same! ll again, everyone, I'm your editor and -h Ben Abernathy! I'm joined for this mate letter column by the Matrix of hip himself, Daniel Warren Johnson!

I can't believe the end is almost here for my time with the TF fam! Let's not dwell on it! Too sad! Letters time!

* * *

Hi Transformers team!

I've never written in a letter before, and before Transformers, I was never even into reading and actively keeping up with comics either!!

It's been great seeing some of the classic guys return in such a beautiful art-style, and I love the new Transformer, Shredhead!! I'm so excited to see where their character goes with that kickass design. And seeing what Starscream went through in #20...ohh, my heart. You guys are actually making me feel really bad for the guy...

That being said, please be nice to Ultra Magnus :') I'm terrified for him...he's suffered enough!! And be nice to any other Transformer that might appear in this run, ya hear... (well two in particular, seeing as I'm a fan of Void Rivals as well...)

NO PROMISES.

All jokes aside, this has been an amazing read, and though there are valid criticisms from others, I trust that y'all have it all planned out! Trust me when I say I'll be reading for as many issues there'll be <3

Love,
Rae!!

Another first time letter writer--welcome, Rae! We do have a plan, have no fear, and I hope you like what we have in store for Ultra Magnus.

For real. He gets such a good moment coming up. Just you wait and thank you, Rae!

* * *

Bah-Weep-Graaaaagnah weep ni ni bong!!

I'm proud to say that since I wrote to you last year, I've since completed my first year of college majoring in graphic design. I've learned a lot, but I still have so many questions about comic-making, so I figured I'd ask the pros.

What program do you use for the artwork? Or is it inked traditionally and then scanned? Also, how do you come up with good stories? I have so many concept ideas, but no idea how to turn them into a decent plot. And DIALOGUE! Why is dialogue so hard?

I still have so much to learn! Please tell me how you make this comic so awesome!!

Thank you,
Emmie

Thank you for writing in, Emmie, and congratulations on finishing your first year of college! I will leave the creative answers to Daniel haha...

Thanks Emmie! I'll get right to your Qs. First, I only used pencil and ink for my comic making, and I'm pretty sure Jorge does his "pencils" digitally, and then prints that out on a piece of Bristol board so he can ink traditionally. I do this too when I make covers. But both ways do require scanning at the end of finishing a page. And as for stories my main piece of advice is to KEEP IT SIMPLE. You know when you sit down to hear (or tell!) a campfire story, it's usually pretty simple, right? Stories don't have to be complicated to be special. It's all about the way a person tells it, and that mostly comes from just leaning into the kind of person and storyteller you already are. Making stories is a celebration of both your personhood and your passions, and you have a unique voice to tell the world those tales. Lastly, when writing dialogue, talk it out as you write it. I will literally act out my characters talking to each other to try and get it right. I get looks at the coffee shop, but it's all worth it. GOOD LUCK TO YOU!

* * *

Howdy Transformers team!

This is my first time submitting a letter to ANYTHING, as I only got into Transformers last year, and it was also my introduction to comics as a whole. I'm WAY too young to have been around when pen was first put to paper to bring together the story of the Transformers, and even some of my favorite TF comics were made when my biggest concern in life was writing legibly and coloring inside the lines! It's kind of a blessing, because that means I have a treasure trove of four decades of stories to dive into. But at the same time, I am so incredibly excited that I finally get to experience a Transformers comic series as it happens.

Welcome to the awesome club, my friend!

I've been an artist for as long as I can remember. But I never really knew what to do with it. No potential profession or job felt right. But as soon as I started reading comics (especially y'all's!), I felt so inspired. This series has really shown me how a picture is worth a thousand words. The scene that stands out to me the most is in issue #1. Spike has no idea who these giant fighting robots are. He's small, confused, and scared. But Spike's face when he watches Optimus mourn Bumblebee says more words than a paragraph could. Spike recognizes this pain. He decides to help this huge blue and red robot from outer space because he can relate to the emotions Optimus feels. This series' portrayal of empathy is powerful.

I really appreciate how y'all have given human characters significance, without the Cybertronians overshadowing their story, as well as the other way around. As an artist, I see a little bit of myself in Carly, and I'm really rooting for her and Spike. Also--Shreadhead is PURE METAL. I love seeing new faces!

My BIGGEST DREAM is to help create Transformers comics one day. Keep making magic, and I really hope that one day I can join in!!!

-Kaia

Thank you for the letter, Kaia, and it's really humbling to hear how much you love our series and how it's inspiring for you as an artist. Keep putting in the work and who knows, perhaps your dream will come true one day!

Kia, it made me so happy reading how you enjoyed and interpreted that scene with Spike in issue 1. Thanks for making my day, and good luck to you!

Hello everyone at Skybound!

My name's Wyatt, and I'm writing this on behalf of myself and my little brother, Landen. Landen and I have always loved Transformers ever since we can remember. My love for Transformers was born when I first saw the 2007 movie, and I've been hooked ever since. I am proud to say Transformers has been a cornerstone of my life in the best way. Landen and I have had some rough times ever since Covid hit. We've gone through a lot together, whether it's burglaries and house fires, or major surgeries and depression, it has been ROUGH. But one good thing that's a constant is your comic. You guys have given us something to look forward to every month, you've given two brothers something to bond over and we thank you. I have consumed most Transformers media, and I have to say this is what Transformers is meant to be. You have made something truly special and you deserve all the love and praise for it. Time and time again have our minds been blown and our hearts been broken. Optimus Prime is a great warrior and leader that would make Peter Cullen proud. So please just keep in mind how many hearts you guys have touched with this comic, because you've definitely touched ours. Thank you for bringing joy to our lives, and making our world a little brighter.

Sincerely,
Wyatt and Landen Sisco

We are honored that our book has had such a powerful and positive impact on your lives these past few years. Month in and month out, Daniel, Jorge, Mike and Rus pour everything into making the best book they can and to know it's so meaningful to readers means everything.

Wyatt and Landen, thank you for reaching out to us with your wonderful letter. How cool is it that these amazing characters have made a connection between us? The Matrix works in wonderful ways. Godspeed to you in the future and I hope you enjoy this Transformers comic for years to come.

Bah wheep grana wheep nini bong!

I just finished reading comic 21. Wow. That. Was. AWESOME!!!! But also kinda sad, too. Why did Slingshot have to die!!? (Well at least it wasn't Air Raid.) Thank you so much for putting in the Aerialbots! And then you combined them! Eeek! As you can tell, I love the Combiners. I have 3 questions for you.

#1: Will there be other Combiners like Dinobots, or Seacons?

I'm sure time will tell!

#2 When will Ravage get repaired? (I'm getting a little nervous.)

He was repaired in #18! (And made an appearance in our Energon Universe Special two months ago!)

Finally, #3: Will Bumblebee get revived into Goldbug like in G1? Me and my friend love Bumblebee, so can you pleeeeaaase revive him? Comic 1 was so sad because of this:(You guys are doing amazing on this series. I cannot wait to read the next one!

Hmmmmm NO COMMENT.

From,
Owen

Thanks for reading, Owen! I'm sort of amazed by how many people ask about the Seacons haha

I do not know who that is.

And that's a wrap, folks! Next month's issue is the blockbuster we've been building toward for two years! Buckle up as it's gonna be a roller coaster!

-Ben

Oh man, just you all WAIT. SO PUMPED. NOTHINGS GONNA STAND IN OUR WAY! NOT TONIGHT!

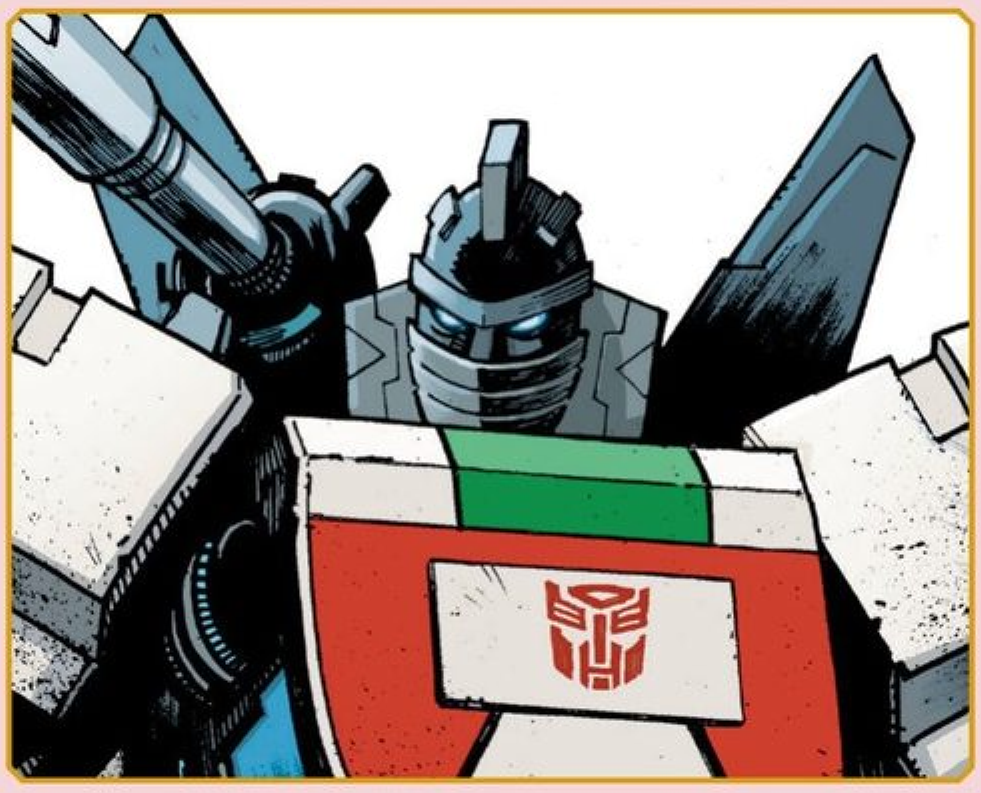
-DWJ

ENERGON EXPERIENCE

The Autobots have been on the verge of destruction for 23 issues and this epic installment was nothing short of a gut punch! How's it going to end? Well, as the last page screamed out: ONE SHALL STAND. ONE SHALL FALL. The outcome might shock you!

Ben!

-BEN ABERNATHY, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

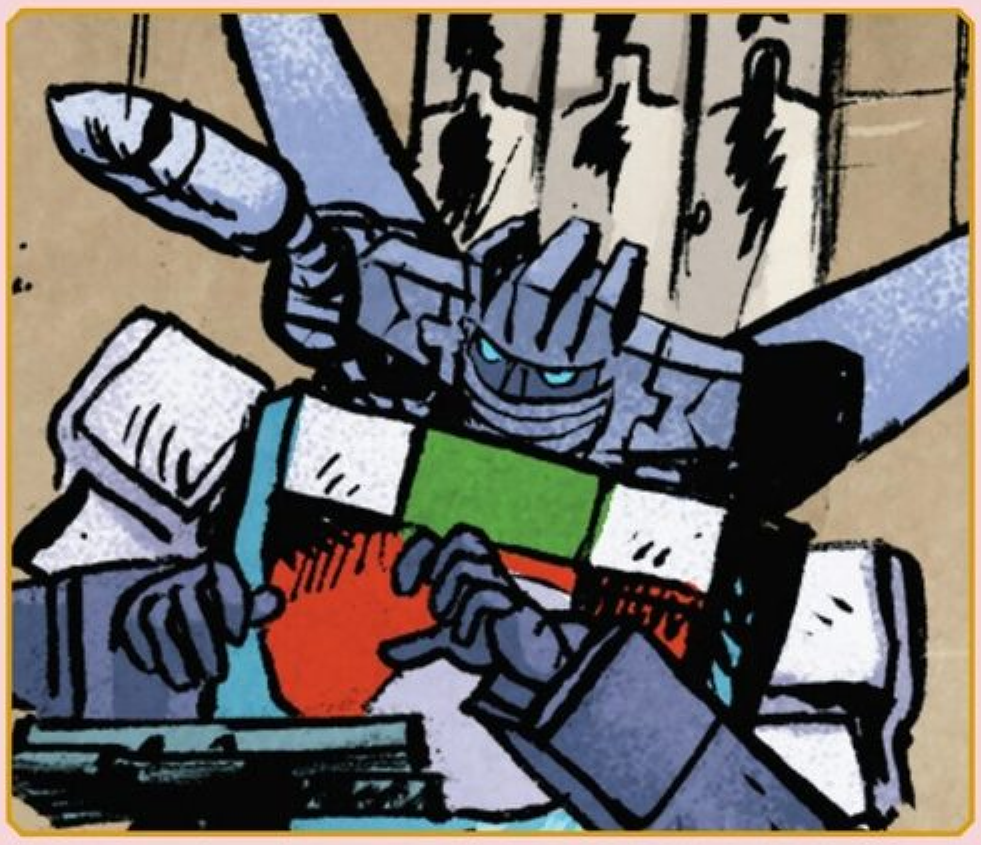


CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

WHO: Wheeljack

WHERE: Wheeljack is the Autobots' lead scientist and one of Optimus Prime's most loyal allies.

WHAT: Facing impossible odds and a never-ending litany of injuries, deaths and Energon shortages, Wheeljack's optimism and inventiveness is a continued inspiration to his fellow Autobots.



FLASHBACK FUN!

With Wheeljack being in our spotlight it's worth calling out that beyond being a scientist he's also a clever inventor… remember how he rigged the dam to generate Energon in #5? And his interstellar movement recorder in this year's ENERGON UNIVERSE SPECIAL?!

This bot can do just about anything!

CREATOR SPOTLIGHT

Our acclaimed colorist on TRANSFORMERS, Mike Spicer, dropped by the Energon Experience to answer this month's question:

Q: Mike, if you were stuck on a desert island, which Autobot would you want there with you and why?

A: Blaster, at least we'd have some tunes!

THE ENERGON UNIVERSE CHECKLIST

☐ **TRANSFORMERS #23**
AVAILABLE 8/13

☐ **G.I. JOE #10**
AVAILABLE 8/20

☐ **VOID RIVALS #22**
AVAILABLE 8/27

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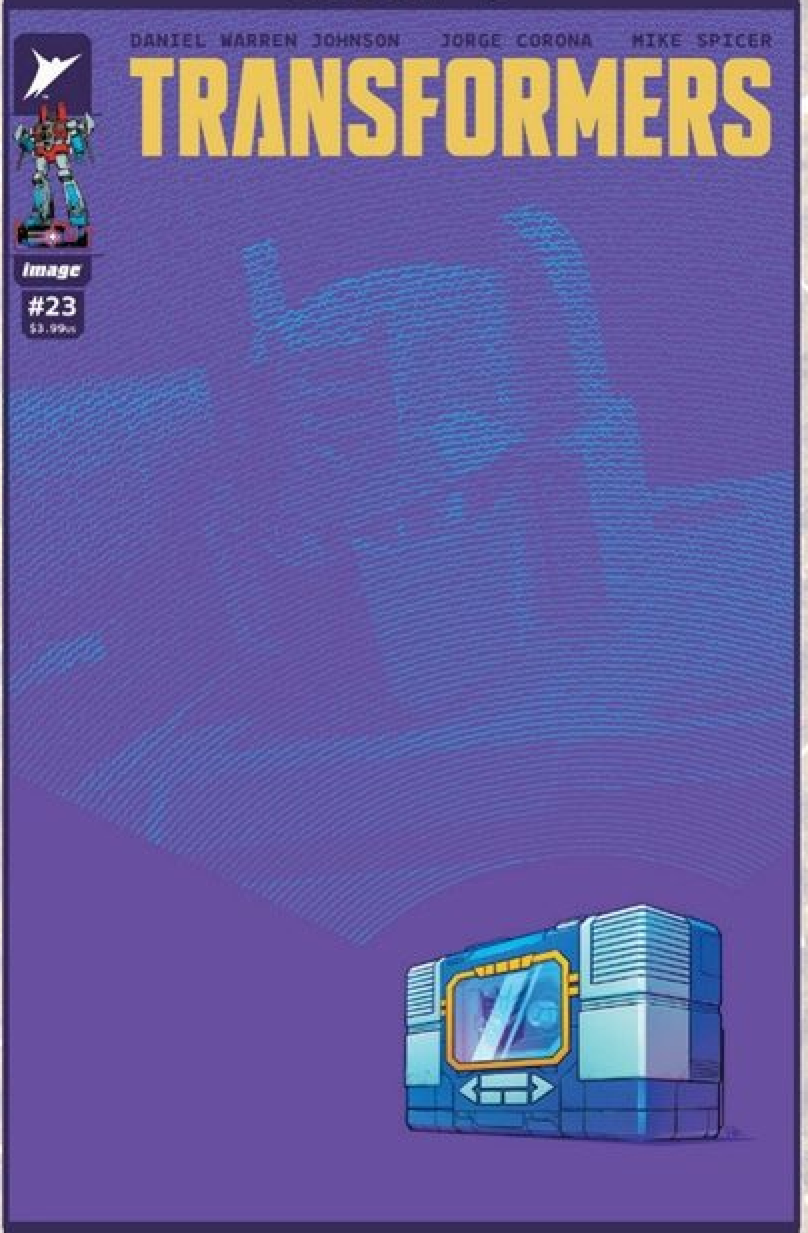
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